GENESIS OT eSOURCES COLLECTION

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For my students and students of the Bible
2004
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Genesis Articles at Gordon
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Joseph in Egypt
First of Six Parts

by Charles Aling

No portion of the Old Testament has a richer Egyptian coloring than the story of Joseph. Egyptian names, titles, places, and customs all appear in Genesis 37-50. In the last one hundred years or so, historical and archaeological research has made the study of the Egyptian elements in the Joseph story more fruitful than ever before. In order to examine the Egyptological information, it is necessary to establish the period in Egyptian history when Joseph was in Egypt.

Mainline contemporary scholarship and the Bible's own chronology are in accord in dating Joseph sometime between 2000 and 1600 BC. This time frame includes two important periods of Egypt's history, the Middle Kingdom (2000-1786 B.C.) and the Second Intermediate Period (1786-1570 B.C.). However, before narrowing down our dates for Joseph any more, let us first survey these two periods.

The Middle Kingdom was one of Egypt's three greatest ages (Hayes, 1964) (Aling, 1981). The country was unified and prosperous, and was in the process of conquering Nubia, located in what is today the Sudan. In the Bible, this area is called Ethiopia.

The eight Pharaohs of this period comprise Egypt's 12th Dynasty: The founder was the great Amenemhat I (1991-1962 BC). He died by assassination, but not before he had associated his son Sesostris I with him on the throne as co-regent. Sesostris in his long reign (1971-1928 BC) campaigned with success in northern Nubia and built at no less than 35 sites in Egypt.

Under his immediate successors, fighting in Nubia subsided and trade received the main royal attentions. Since Babylon had not yet emerged as a great power under...
Hammurabi, Egypt stood alone as the world's greatest nation.

The most important king of the 12th Dynasty was Sesostris III (1878-1843 BC). He renewed the efforts to conquer Nubia, and was successful. All of Nubia as far south as Semnah was taken. Sesostris III also instituted great administrative reforms. He broke the power of the local nobility. These officials had been a thorn in the side of the Pharaohs all through the 12th Dynasty. We know little in detail of what Sesostris III did, but he did end the semi-independence of the so-called Nomarchs (provincial governors). We will have occasion to return to this point later.

Under Amenemhat III (1842-1797 B.C.) the Middle Kingdom reached its highest level of material prosperity. Egypt was very successful in foreign trade. The exploitation of mines and quarries was greater than ever before, and a project to reclaim land in the Faiyum region to the west of the Nile valley was completed.

The final rulers of the Twelfth Dynasty (including one female king) were weak. As central authority broke down, so did control of Egypt's borders with Syria-Palestine. This enabled an ever-expanding infiltration of Asiatics to enter Egypt's delta region. Eventually these Asiatics were able to seize control of northern Egypt, thus ending the Middle Kingdom period of Egyptian history.

The Second Intermediate Period, or as it is sometimes called, "the Hyksos Period," was not a time of greatness for Egypt. The north was controlled by Asiatics, a group called the Hyksos by the Egyptians. The south was ruled by local Egyptian dynasts of no great power or importance, at least in their early years. [The best study of the Hyksos is John Van Seters, The Hyksos (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).]

A few comments on the Hyksos are necessary here. There are several wrong views concerning them which have become popularly held. The first is that they entered Egypt by means of a massive military invasion led by chariots. While the Hyksos
probably did introduce the war chariot to Egypt, they most certainly did not enter the country and conquer it in a military campaign. They entered the Nile delta gradually and, finding themselves there in sufficient numbers to do so, simply established one of their leaders as an Egyptian-style Pharaoh. They resided in a capital city called Avaris; later in Egyptian history this city would be re-named "Ramses" after the great king Ramses II (1290-1223 BC).

Another misconception about the Hyksos concerns their name. Josephus, a Jewish historian writing in the first century AD during the days of the great Jewish Revolt against the Roman Empire and Rome's armies led by Vespasian, said that the term "Hyksos" meant "Shepherd Kings." This is of course quite wrong. The name Hyksos comes from two Egyptian words meaning "Rulers of Foreign Lands," and has nothing at all to do with shepherds.

The final incorrect idea regarding the Hyksos is that they ruled all of Egypt. They did not. They only controlled the delta region, at least for any length of time.
During which of these two periods of time did Joseph come to Egypt as a slave? It has become fashionable among scholars to date him to the Hyksos period, since it is generally assumed that the Israelites were fellow Asiatics related to the Hyksos. It is also assumed that, since Joseph eventually rose to a high position in the Egyptian court, the king must have been a fellow countryman of Joseph's. If we allow for a sojourn of some 400 years in Egypt by the Israelites, and if we accept the so-called Late Date of the Exodus (in the middle 1200's BC), a date for Joseph around 1650 BC would be perfect.

The Bible, on the other hand, provides us with some very specific chronological data regarding these events. I Kings 6:1, a pivotal reference for all Old Testament chronology, dates the Exodus 480 years before the fourth year of Solomon, accepted by virtually all scholars as 966 BC. This places the Exodus in ca. 1446 BC; a date which agrees with the so-called Early Date for the Exodus.

Next, Exodus 12:40 states that Jacob came to dwell in Egypt 430 years before the Exodus. Thus he came to Egypt in ca. 1876 BC. These Biblical references clearly show that Joseph ought to be dated in the Middle Kingdom rather than in the Hyksos Period.

Several specific points in the Joseph story confirm a Middle Kingdom rather than a Hyksos date for Joseph. In Genesis 41:14 Joseph is called out of prison to meet with the king. Before going to meet the king, Joseph puts on new (clean) clothing and shaves himself. This becomes understandable when we realize that the Egyptians were a clean people and were particularly offended by facial hair. This verse points to the Pharaoh being a native Egyptian, and not Hyksos. The latter, being Asiatics, were not bothered by facial hair and a general lack of cleanliness. When Joseph is rewarded and promoted by the Pharaoh for interpreting the king's dream, he is named to be ruler over all the land of Egypt (see Genesis 41). The Hyksos never ruled all the land of Egypt, but the native Egyptian Pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom did.

Also, when Joseph is given a wife by the king as a reward for his interpretation of the dream, the woman is said to
be the daughter of Potiphera, Priest of On. On was the center of solar worship in ancient Egypt. The chief god worshiped there was Re or Ra, the northern manifestation of Amon-Re, the supreme deity of both the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom periods of Egyptian history.

The Hyksos, while they did not persecute the worshipers of Re, did not give that deity the number one position. Their favorite deity was Set, a delta god sometimes regarded by the Egyptians as nearly a devil-like figure. The Hyksos identified Set with the Palestinian god Baal, a god from their Canaanite homeland who was very familiar to them.

Now if Joseph was being rewarded by a Hyksos king, it stands to reason that his new wife would not have been the daughter of a priest of Re, but rather the daughter of a priest of Set. Once again, the Middle Kingdom seems a better choice for dating Joseph than the Second Intermediate Period. Thus, relying on the Biblical chronology and the historical material, we will place Joseph in the Middle Kingdom Period, under two great rulers, Sesostris II (1897-1878 BC) and Sesostris III (1878-1843 BC).

Joseph entered Egypt as a slave. It is interesting to note that slavery was not a very old concept in Egypt. It had not existed earlier in the Old Kingdom, the period when the great pyramids were being built. Those structures were not, as is sometimes stated, built by slave labor. They were constructed by drafted peasant labor.

The Middle Kingdom is the first major period in Egyptian history where slavery was well known. In the 1950s AD, the American Egyptologist William C. Hayes published a famous papyrus document from the Middle Kingdom which had a list of slaves on one side and a discussion of Egyptian prisons on the other (Hayes 1972). In the next issue of *Bible and Spade*, we will examine the information this valuable papyrus provides for us regarding the story of Joseph.
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Joseph in Egypt
Second of Six Parts

By Charles Aling

Joseph began life in Egypt as a slave (Gn 39:1). As we saw in Part I of this study, these events in the life of Joseph should be dated to the great Middle Kingdom period of Egyptian history (2000-1782 BC).

It is important to note that during the Middle Kingdom, slavery as an institution of society flourished in Egypt. Evidence from Egyptian texts, indicates that at this time in Egypt's history, the number of Syro-Palestinian slaves in bondage in the Nile Valley was growing constantly (Aling 1981: 30, note 14). While some of these Asiatic slaves must have been prisoners of war captured by the Egyptian army in raids to the north, the majority certainly were not obtained by violence (Aling: 30). Most of the slaves were female; prisoners of war would have been predominantly male. Also, there are no Egyptian records of any major wars being fought by Egypt in Syria-Palestine in the Middle Kingdom. It is best to conclude that most of the Asiatic slaves entered Egypt just as Joseph did, through the slave trade. This, however, brings up an interesting question: why is there no written evidence at all of a slave trade between Syria-Palestine and Egypt?

First, let it be said that dismissing something on the basis of a lack of evidence is a dangerous business. Today, we have very few of the written documents composed in the Ancient Near East. What we have reflects accidental preservation. And, when we realize that the slave trade would have centered in the Nile Delta (northern Egypt), accidental preservation becomes even less likely due to the high water table there. Very few papyrus documents have been recovered from that region, especially from the earlier periods of Egyptian history. Also, the slave trade would have been in all probability in private hands rather than under government control. This
would have made preservation of documentary evidence even more remote. Lastly, it is very possible that the slave trade would have been in the hands of foreigners rather than Egyptians, as the Bible implies in the case of Joseph. Records in so far as they were kept at all, would thus not be kept by Egyptians but by the
Asiatics who were selling other Asiatic men and women to the Egyptians.

We are fortunate to have a papyrus from the Middle Kingdom that deals with slaves. This papyrus was studied and published some years ago by the American Egyptologist William C. Hayes (Hayes 1972). We will have occasion to refer to this remarkable document in the next issue of Bible and Spade, since the reverse side of this same papyrus contains a discussion of Egyptian prisons, another topic of vital importance for the Joseph story. But this papyrus' main significance lies in its list of Middle Kingdom slaves with names, nationality and titles or jobs held by these slaves. The list contains 95 entries. Of the 95 slaves listed, about 30 can be identified as non-Egyptian, either by their non-Egyptian names or by the designation "name", meaning an Asiatic (Hayes: 92).

Two things of great interest emerge from a study of the Asiatic slaves on this list. First, the names are very significant to the student of the Bible. Several of them are either identical to or very similar to some names familiar to us from the Old Testament itself. A female version of the Hebrew name Menahem is present; Sk-ra-tw, also the name of a woman, is paralleled by the Hebrew name Issachar; Ashra is most certainly the feminine version of Asher; and Shepra is known to us in the Old Testament as Shiphrah, the Hebrew midwife in the Book of Exodus (Hayes: 95-96). Secondly, the duties assigned to the Asiatic slaves in our list provide some important correlations to Joseph's career. The kinds of jobs performed by the Asiatic slaves are generally less onerous than those assigned to native Egyptian slaves, and are in fact classifiable as skilled labor (Hayes: 93). Let us examine some of the titles held by the Asiatic slaves.

One of the most common titles held by male Asiatic slaves was that of "Household Servant" (Hayes: 103 ff). This is not only a confirmation of the accuracy of Scripture, which assigns this title to Joseph, but also helps us to get
a better idea of what kinds of work Joseph would have been involved in while a slave of Potiphar. When we examine Egyptian monuments that picture or discuss household servants, we find that such slaves performed the normal kinds of tasks we would expect. For example, they are often shown in tomb paintings bringing food and drink to their masters (Hayes: 104). An Asiatic slave could also be a cook, a teacher, or a brewer (Aling: 35).

A final fact to note from Hayes' papyrus is that slaves in the Middle Kingdom were commonly owned by private individuals. It has always been known that the governments of the Near East were owners of large numbers of slaves, many of whom would have been used in the vast construction projects of the state such as temple building, palace repair, and the construction of fortifications. It may be assumed that slaves would also have been employed as laborers on both the large agricultural estates of the king and of the temples. But here, in the papyrus published by Hayes, we have evidence (p. 134) that officials of wealth and standing also could own slaves. The Potiphar of Genesis must have been such a man.

Joseph's entire life and career were indeed remarkable. As the Bible repeats again and again, the Lord was with Joseph and blessed what he did. God's blessing was, in fact, so obvious that Joseph's Egyptian masters were able to recognize it! (Gn 39:3) We find in Genesis 39:4 that Potiphar, Joseph's first Egyptian master, promoted Joseph from being merely a household servant to become his steward, the one over his household. What did this entail? From the far better documented New Kingdom period of Egyptian history (1570-1085 BC), we have information on the duties of the steward (Aling: 35-36). Under Mery, the High Priest of the god Amon for King Amenhotep II, a man named Djehuty served as steward. Two of his subsidiary titles were "Scribe of Offerings" and "Chief of Agricultural slaves." The first proves that he was literate,
and the second shows us his primary duty, the supervision of his master's agricultural estates. Several other stewards known from New Kingdom times had the same titles. This indicates two things about Joseph. First, he was literate. He would have to be to hold a stewardship. How and when he learned to read and write the complex Egyptian language is not known. Perhaps it was when he was a household servant of Potiphar. In any case, we may assume that Joseph was a quick and diligent student. Secondly, as a steward, Joseph would have been in charge of the agricultural holdings of his master, Potiphar. We should remember that ancient Egypt did not have a money economy as we know it today, and officials such as Potiphar would have been paid for their work by being allowed the use or ownership of farmlands. Potiphar would not have the time or perhaps even the skills to supervise the land and its cultivation himself; hence the necessity for a steward. We remember too that Joseph came from an agricultural family, and presumably already had extensive knowledge of farming techniques and farm animals.

From a practical point of view, there are two reasons why it is important for the modern student of the Bible to realize all this about Joseph. First, through a knowledge of what an Egyptian steward did, we can see the accuracy of the book of Genesis, even in minute details. Note for example Genesis 39:5. At the end of this verse, we are told that Potiphar's holdings were blessed for Joseph's sake, both in the house and in the field. When we understand that Joseph was a steward, and when we learn what kinds of things a steward did in both the house and the field, we have a far clearer appreciation of this verse and what it is telling us. Second, when we see that Joseph was an Egyptian steward, we see him getting the kind of on-the-job training he would need for the ultimate task God had for him, the task of preserving the people of Israel during the coming time of great famine. As we will see in a later article, Joseph will eventually become the head of agriculture for the entire land of Egypt. Under Potiphar, he received vital experience on a smaller scale for the far
greater responsibility he will have later. He was faithful over a small job; God would therefore give him a more important one (Lk 16:10).

In our next article, we will find Joseph in prison. This same papyrus published by Hayes will give us much information on this aspect of the life of Joseph.

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Joseph in Egypt
Third of Six Parts

By Charles Aling

As all who are familiar with the Biblical account will remember, Joseph, while still in the household of Potiphar, was falsely accused of adultery with the wife of his master and thrown into prison. The normal punishment for adultery in ancient Egypt was death; the fact that Joseph did not suffer execution is interesting and perhaps indicates that Potiphar doubted the veracity of his wife, who had made the accusation. In any case, Joseph spent time in an Egyptian prison.

The Biblical mention of Joseph serving time in a prison is noteworthy in itself. To us in the 20th century, serving time in a prison as punishment for a crime seems quite natural. But in the ancient world, this was not the case. The death penalty, a fine, or even bodily mutilation were the usual means of making people suffer for their crimes in the ancient Near East.

Prisons were rare in the ancient world. To see this, one need only look at the Old Testament Law. There is nothing there about serving a prison sentence for any sin or crime, and in fact there is nothing Biblically or archaeologically that would lead us to believe that the Hebrews even had prisons as we know them. The importance, then, of the prison sentence of Joseph is that the author of the book of Genesis is recording correct information, for Egypt was one of the few nations in the ancient Near East that had prisons in the classical sense of the term.

We are very fortunate to have an Egyptian papyrus, translated and published by the Egyptologist W. C. Hayes, that deals at length with Egyptian prisons (Hayes 1972). We have mentioned it also deals with Asiatic slaves in Middle Kingdom Egypt. Let us look at what this papyrus tells us about prisons and prison life in Egypt in the days of Joseph (Hayes 1972: 37-42).

The main prison of Egypt was called the "Place of Confinement." It was divided into two parts: a "cell-block" like a modern prison, and "a barracks" for holding a large number of prisoners who were forced into serving as laborers for the government. What kinds of sentences were given to prisoners? We know little about specific sentencing procedures. It does not seem that criminals were given a number of years to serve in prison. Perhaps all sentences were life sentences. In any case, some of the prisoners in the Place of Confinement were "serving time" for their crimes, as Joseph presumably was. Other
prisoners, however, were simply being held in prison awaiting the decision of the government as to what their punishment was to be. In other words, they were waiting to find out if they were going to be executed. This last category seems to be that of the two individuals Joseph met while in prison, the Butler and the Baker.

Who were the two individuals? We are never told their names or their crimes. The fact that one of them, the Baker, was eventually executed, and the other, the Butler, was restored to office, leads us to believe that they were accused of being involved in some kind of plot against the king. Such things happened in ancient Egypt. In such a case, once the king sorted out the facts, the guilty would be punished and the
innocent would be exonerated. The Baker was executed (for treason) and the Butler was restored to his position. But what was that position?

We get the term "butler" from the KJV translation of the Bible, and it brings to our minds the very British concept of a man in a tuxedo who answers doorbells and supervises household servants. This does not reflect the situation in the Joseph story. The Hebrew title is "Cup Bearer" (for a Middle Kingdom example, see Vergote 1959: 50). The duties of this personage involved providing beverages to the king; hence we see the importance of having someone trustworthy on the job.

Getting back to the prison itself, let us see what else the Hayes papyrus tells us about it. The main prison was located at Thebes (modern Luxor) in Upper Egypt, some 400 mi south of the Nile delta and modern Cairo. Assuming Joseph was there and not at some smaller prison (a correct assumption I believe since key royal officials were imprisoned there too), we see that the entire Joseph story cannot be confined to the delta area of the Nile as some scholars would have us believe.

As the Genesis account states, there was a "Warden" or "Overseer of the Prison," who was assisted by a large staff of clerks and scribes. Record keeping at such an institution was as important to the ancient Egyptians as it is in a modern prison. The actual title Overseer of the Prison is not commonly found in Egyptian inscriptions, but examples do exist from the Middle Kingdom, the time of Joseph.

One of the chief assistants to the Warden or Overseer was the "Scribe of the Prison." In Genesis 39:22 we are told that Joseph was promoted to high office in the prison. Since Joseph was literate, as we have seen from the fact that he served as steward in the household of Potiphar, it seems probable that he was promoted to Scribe of the Prison. As such, he would not only have been the right-hand man of the Warden, but he also would have been in charge of all the records of the institution.

No matter how high in rank he became, Joseph naturally would have valued his personal freedom more than a high office in the prison. When he interpreted the dream of the Cup Bearer as meaning that the Cup Bearer would be freed and restored to his post, Joseph implored that individual to remember him when he has the ear of Pharaoh. The Cup Bearer promises to do so, but quickly forgets Joseph when he assumes his old position again. It is only when Pharaoh himself dreams a dream that the Cup Bearer remembers the young Hebrew who could, through the power of God, interpret dreams. At that time, Joseph is called out of prison.

One final point needs to be noted. Joseph, before going to the king, has to change his clothing and shave (Gn 41:14). These are significant details. Native Egyptians were very concerned about personal cleanliness and the removal of all facial hair—the beards worn by kings were false beards. If Joseph appeared before a Hyksos, i.e. non-Egyptian Pharaoh, these factors would not have been so significant. It is likely
that the ancient Hyksos were Amorites, and we have ancient pieces of art indicating that the Amorites grew beards. This verse, therefore, is further evidence that the Pharaoh of Joseph's day was Egyptian and not Hyksos, and that Joseph is correctly dated to the Middle Kingdom period.

In our next article we will examine Joseph's encounter with Pharaoh, a real turning point in the career of the Biblical Patriarch.

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Joseph in Egypt
Fourth of Six Parts

By Charles Aling

In Genesis 41, Joseph meets the king of Egypt. As we saw in our last article, he had been prepared for this encounter by being cleaned up and shaved, in true Egyptian fashion. He was now ready to meet the most powerful and important man on earth. Before we consider this meeting however, a word on the title Pharaoh is necessary. This term means literally "Great House," and refers to the palace establishment of Egypt. As the years passed, the title "Pharaoh" began to be used when speaking of the king, the main inhabitant of the palace and the head of Egypt's government.

If we date Joseph to the Middle Kingdom period of Egyptian history, as I believe it is correct to do, an apparent problem arises. At this early stage of Egyptian history, the title Pharaoh was not used to refer to the king in direct address; such use begins only in Egypt's powerful 18th Dynasty in about 1400 BC, some 300 years after the time of Joseph.

We must remember, however, that Joseph did not write the account we have in Genesis; Moses did. Moses of course lived much later than Joseph, in about 1400 BC. During his time, the title Pharaoh was beginning to be used as a form of direct address for the king of Egypt. It is important to note that Moses does not use Pharaoh followed by a proper name. This practice was only instituted in the late period of Egyptian history, as is correctly reflected in Jeremiah 44:30, where "Pharaoh Hophra" is mentioned.

But let us turn to the events surrounding the actual meeting between Joseph and the king, most probably Sesostris II of Dynasty 12. As all of us will recall from our own study of the
Scriptures, Pharaoh had had a dream. His magicians (the Hebrew in Genesis 41 is an accurate translation of the Egyptian word for a magician) could not tell the meaning of his dream.

At this point, the Butler (Cupbearer) remembered his friend Joseph from prison days who had interpreted his dream and that of the Baker. Joseph's interpretation of their dreams had come true. This was the man to send to the king to interpret his dream. Pharaoh's dream, itself full of Egyptian coloring, predicted according to Joseph's interpretation that Egypt would experience seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

The years of plenty would of course cause no problem; but in a country dependent on agriculture, seven years of famine could spell disaster. The Pharaoh is then offered sage advice by Joseph: find a man to supervise Egypt's produce during the seven good years. He should put aside one fifth of the produce of the seven good years for distribution during the seven bad years.

In Genesis 41:39, two remarkable things take place. First, Pharaoh acknowledges that God (singular) has revealed all this to Joseph. He must have been told this fact by Joseph himself. It is interesting that this man of God was not afraid to give credit to the Lord even while speaking to a pagan king who was considered to be a god on earth by his people. This shows solid faith and remarkable courage on the part of Joseph. Second, Pharaoh realizes that Joseph has the Lord's wisdom and appoints him to be the one in charge of Egypt's agricultural production during these important years.

After all of this takes place, a very significant scene is described. In Genesis 41:40-45, Joseph is appointed to high office in Egypt and is given several rewards--a ring, a gold chain, new linen robes, a chariot, an Egyptian name, and a wife. The interpretation of this scene has created a good deal of controversy among scholars. Traditionally, the entire scene has been taken to represent some kind of investiture ceremony. Joseph is named to high position, and is given the trappings of high office.

[graphic] Pharaoh gave Joseph "Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife" (Gn 41:45). Little remains at On (called Heliopolis by the Greeks) except for this lone obelisk. A grand temple to the Egyptian god Re stood here in Joseph's day.
This interpretation is, however, certainly wrong. The Egyptologist Donald B. Redford in his study of the Joseph story examined all known scenes in Egyptian tomb paintings where individuals are given gold chains (Redford 1970: 208 If). In the 32 known paintings of this event, not one has anything to do with induction into high office. They all, on the other hand, show an individual being rewarded for service rendered. Redford uses this information to deny the accuracy of the Biblical account. We do not agree with him on that point, though.

What is happening in these verses is a two-fold ceremony. In verses 40-41, Pharaoh officially appoints Joseph to high office in Egypt (in our next article, we will try to establish exactly which Egyptian titles Joseph held). However, in verses 42-45, Pharaoh rewards Joseph for what he has revealed.

Let us look at how Joseph was rewarded. Of the three items of personal adornment mentioned, the gold chain is by far the most important. As Redford has pointed out, this is a common item in reward scenes in Egyptian tomb paintings (most of the examples come from the New Kingdom period, somewhat later than the days of Joseph). While the ring and the linen robes are not prominently mentioned in Egyptian reward scenes, the gold chain catches our attention because one would not expect an Egyptian reward ceremony to occur without it. This again indicates the accurate Egyptian nature of the details of the Joseph Story.

Joseph's new chariot is also of special interest (Aling 1981: 44-45). As a vehicle for war, the chariot seems to have only been introduced into Egypt during the Hyksos period, 1786-1570 BC. This would be, according to the dates calculated from the Bible itself, too late for Joseph. There is, however, nothing strange about the Egyptians having a few chariots for high officials to use in the Middle Kingdom period when Joseph lived. In this passage of Scripture we are not looking at war chariots lined up for battle in some anachronistic way. In fact, the implication of the Biblical text is that there were not many chariots in Egypt at this time. Joseph's chariot is called "the second chariot," implying that the only person who outranked him, Pharaoh himself, had the other.

What of Joseph's new name? Unfortunately, scholars are uncertain about the Egyptian original for the Hebrew version Zaphnath-paaneah (Kitchen 1996; Redford, 1970: 230-31). Identification of the Egyptian name of Joseph would be of great interest, since some of the viziers of the Middle Kingdom period are known to us. Our small sample of names, though, probably does not include Joseph's.
Joseph also was granted a wife. The woman's name was Asenath, which is a good Egyptian female name of the period. We know little of her, other than her name and the name of her father. Knowing Joseph, however, we must assume that he taught her to have faith in the true God of Heaven, despite her pagan background.

But who was her father? The Bible gives us several tantalizing facts about the man. He is called Potiphera. This is a variant of the name Potiphar, the only other male named in the Joseph Story. As we all recall, Potiphar was Joseph's former master. In both cases it is likely that we are not dealing with a personal name at all. Such a grammatical construction of a name, meaning "the

[graphic] Pharaoh had Joseph "ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and men shouted before him, "Make way!"
(Gn 41:43). Golden state chariot from the tomb of Tutankhamun, ca. 1325 BC.
one given by Re (the Sun god)," would only be possible in the later periods of Egyptian history. It would also be strange to have two men named who have virtually the same name, while none of the kings is named. It seems most likely that the two men involved are not actually being referred to by name, but that we are being told that they were native Egyptians.

We are also told that the father of Asenath was a priest. This in itself is not terribly significant, other than to show that Joseph was being highly favored since priests were at the pinnacle of Egyptian society. What is important is the further information we are given in Genesis 41:45. Asenath's father was Priest of the city of On. On was known to the Greeks as Heliopolis, and was the center of worship of the sun god Re. It was also the educational center of ancient Egypt. The High Priest of the god Re at that city was a key figure in Egyptian religion and politics.

That Joseph married the daughter of a priest of Re at Heliopolis is important as confirmation of our date for Joseph in the Middle Kingdom and not in the Hyksos period as so many scholars wish to do. His marriage must be regarded as a high honor, as it is part of the rewards given him for what he has done. It thus stands to reason that the priest of On and his god Re were highly favored by the Pharaoh at that time.

Under the Hyksos, the god Re, while not being persecuted as was once thought by some scholars, was certainly not the main god: For the Hyksos the god Set, a Nile delta deity often equated with the Canaanite god Baal, was number one. If Joseph dates to the Hyksos period, we would not expect to find Re being so important. That Joseph marries a daughter of the Priest of Re is evidence for his belonging to a period of history when native Egyptian kings ruled in Egypt, not Hyksos foreigners.

In our next article, we will examine the titles Joseph held in the Egyptian government.

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[graphic]Artist's reconstruction of the entry facade of the Temple of Re at On. Joseph's father-in-law was a priest at this temple and Joseph's marriage to his daughter no doubt had political ramifications.

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Joseph in Egypt
Fifth of Six Parts

By Charles Aling

The specific Egyptian titles granted to Joseph by Pharaoh have been discussed at great length by modern scholars. The key verse is Genesis 45:8, which mentions three titles held by Joseph. The Hebrew text of course does not give the Egyptian form of these three titles. Hence, years of scholarly debate have arisen over the exact Egyptian renditions of the Hebrew words or phrases.

Of the three titles that Joseph held, let us begin with the one obvious title, and then move on to the two more complex and problematical titles.

Lord of Pharaoh's House

Genesis 45:8 states that Joseph was made Lord of all of Pharaoh's House. This title has an exact Egyptian counterpart, which is normally translated into English as "Chief Steward of the King."

The main job of the Chief Steward was the detailed supervision of the King's personal agricultural estates, the number of which would have been vast. This fits well with Joseph's advice regarding the coming years of plenty and the following years of famine. As Chief Steward, Joseph would be well placed to prepare for the coming famine during the years of more abundant production.

It is interesting to observe that another specific responsibility of the Chief Steward was to take charge of the royal granaries, where the agricultural wealth of the nation was stored. As the person in charge of these great storehouses, Joseph was ideally placed for carrying out his suggestion to store food during the good years for the bad.

On the practical side, two things can be learned from Joseph's post as Chief Steward. First, note how God had prepared him for his task. No one starts out in life at the top of the ladder. We all must learn the ropes, so to speak, from the ground floor up. Joseph had been steward of the estates of Potiphar. This job was very much like that of Chief Steward of the King, but on a much smaller scale. Joseph without doubt received...
on-the-job training as Potiphar's steward, which stood him in good stead when he later was promoted to the same job in the King's household.

As Potiphar's steward, Joseph did his job faithfully. We are told that all that Potiphar owned prospered under the stewardship of Joseph. Joseph evidently learned well. He was therefore
ready when the Lord allowed him to become Chief Steward for all of Egypt.

A second point is also worth mentioning. As Chief Steward of the King, Joseph was perfectly placed to care for God's Chosen People during the famine. As Genesis 45:7 tells us, God put Joseph into this position in order to save the Patriarchal family. It is almost certain that Joseph did not know this at the time of his appointment, but God had plans for him. And, in the same way, wherever God places us, He may have a major task for us to do later. Like Joseph, we should do the best we can at whatever task He gives us, so that we will be ready when called upon later.

Father to Pharaoh

Genesis 45:8 also calls Joseph "Father to Pharaoh." Of course, this does not mean that Joseph was the physical father of the King of Egypt. There was no blood connection between the two men. Pharaoh was an Egyptian; Joseph was a Hebrew. Even if we assume, as many scholars do, that the Pharaoh in the Joseph story was a Hyksos king, there is no reason to suspect any blood relation between the two men. Dismissing that possibility, what then does the phrase "Father of Pharaoh" mean?

Father of Pharaoh, or more literally "father of the God" (the Egyptians believed their kings to be divine), had a variety of meanings in ancient Egypt. One was as a term for the tutor of the King during the ruler's childhood. In Joseph's case this is not likely. He had never met the King until called out of prison to interpret the royal dream. Nor does the Bible ever suggest that Joseph held such a post.

Another way the title was used was as a designation for an individual whose daughter became a wife of the reigning king. In other words, "Father of the God" meant "father-in-law." Again, we may dismiss this meaning for Joseph's title. The Bible says nothing about Joseph having any daughters, let alone daughters who married the King of Egypt.

Yet another usage of the title was as a designation for minor priests in Egypt's complex state religion. Again, this does not seem even a remote possibility for Joseph. He was never a priest in ancient Egypt, and as a servant of the true God, he would not have such an office.
A last use of the title "Father of the God," however, makes more sense for Joseph. The Egyptians used this title as a special honor given to officials who had served long and well, or who had done the King some special favor. Joseph would easily qualify for the title Father of the God when used in this way; in fact, this is the only usage that makes sense. Joseph would have been named Father of the God for interpreting the dream of the King, and for suggesting a plan for Egypt to get through seven terrible years of famine.

**Ruler Throughout all the Land of Egypt**

Joseph's third possible title is more controversial, and merits a more extended treatment. The basic question is whether Joseph ever became Vizier, or Prime Minister, of Egypt.

Genesis 45:8, by calling Joseph "Ruler of all Egypt," seems to suggest that he became the Vizier of Egypt. And, when Pharaoh promoted and rewarded Joseph, he said that only as King would he be greater than Joseph. But the modern scholar William Ward has argued that Joseph never became Vizier (Ward 1960: 144-50). Ward states that Hebrew phrases such as those mentioned above are not specific equivalents of the Egyptian title of Vizier, but are rather only renditions of vague Egyptian epithets given to other, lesser, officials.

However, Joseph obviously held only one of the vague epithets discussed by Ward and that epithet was "Chief of the Entire Land." While Ward is correct in stating that this epithet was at times used for officials of lower rank, it was most commonly used for Viziers. And, for the phrase in Genesis 41:40, "Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you," no exact Egyptian parallel exists. The Hebrew text strongly suggests that Joseph became the Vizier of Egypt.

Assuming that Joseph was indeed Vizier, what were his duties?

There are Egyptian inscriptions that describe the duties of the Vizier of Egypt. Although such inscriptions are much later than Joseph's time (they date from the New Kingdom), several texts exist which describe in great detail the duties and powers of the office of Vizier.
The Vizier was the chief record keeper of the government records, was the supervisor of the government in general, appointed lower officials of government to office, controlled access to the person of the Pharaoh, and generally supervised construction work and industry in Egypt's state-run economy (Aling 1984: 49). More pertinent to Joseph, the Vizier also
was in charge of agricultural production, just what he needed to care for God's people in the time of famine.

Also, another power held by the Vizier has great interest in regard to the Joseph story. Only the Vizier welcomed foreign embassies coming into Egypt. So, when Joseph's brothers came to Egypt for food, they would normally meet with the Vizier. And, Joseph is the man they met (Gil 42).

It is also interesting that in referring to Joseph, the brothers normally call him "the man." This is perhaps a play on words since the Egyptian word for man and the Egyptian word for Vizier are only one letter different.

The positions of Vizier and Chief Steward of the King were both very high posts in the government of Ancient Egypt, even as far back as the Middle Kingdom. It is reasonable to ask if there are any known officials with these titles that could have been Joseph. The answer is no, at least at the present time. One problem is that we know comparatively few Viziers and Chief Stewards from the Middle Kingdom. Also, another major obstacle is that we do not know the Egyptian form of Joseph's name, only the Hebrew.

There is, however, one fact of interest that we know about Middle Kingdom Viziers. It is rare in the early part of the Middle Kingdom period to find one person holding both the title of Vizier and the title of Chief Steward of the King. But, from the time of Sesostris II of the Middle Kingdom, we do find examples until the end of the 12th Dynasty. It is possible that Joseph broke new ground in this regard, being the first person to hold both positions at the same time.

**The Seven Years of Famine**

As for the seven years of famine, no contemporary Egyptian record of this famine exists. But from a later time, when Greek kings ruled Egypt after Alexander the Great's conquest of Egypt, there is an Egyptian text which mentions a seven-year famine, but dates it to the reign of King Djoser of the Old Kingdom.

One wonders if this is a garbled memory of the famine in Joseph's day, simply re-dated to the reign of a more famous king. Confirmation of such a theory is nearly impossible, but it is interesting to speculate about. In our next article in this series we will consider some final aspects of the Joseph story.
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We do not know how many years Joseph served as Egypt's Vizier (Prime Minister). It is very interesting that he evidently held two key titles, Vizier and Chief Steward of the King. This is relatively unusual in Egyptian history.

Significantly, the best known examples come from the Middle Kingdom, exactly the period of Joseph's career. While none of officials holding these two posts can be identified with Joseph, it is probable that he was the first to do so and set a precedent.
Two deaths are recorded near the end of the Book of Genesis, that of Jacob and of Joseph himself. Both men were embalmed, or mummified. Today, the popular view is that this was a mysterious process about which we know little or nothing. Such is not the case. With the large number of mummies preserved in museums, we would be poor scientists indeed if we could not reconstruct this procedure. What then were the basics of mummification? (see Adams 1984, and on the popular level, Davis 1986)

Two things were essential to the mummification process. First, the body was dried. A great deal was accomplished in this regard by the naturally dry climate of Egypt. I remember seeing a photograph of a Roman soldier who had died in Egypt and who had been buried in the sand without any kind of embalming treatment at all. His hair was well preserved, as were his teeth, and there was a good deal of skin remaining, too. The Egyptians aided this natural drying process, however. They packed the body with a powdery substance called natron (basically sodium carbonate and sodium bi-carbonates). This chemical is found naturally in several locations in Egypt (Lucas 1962: 263ff).

It is important to realize that a liquid solution was not used, but rather that the body was packed in this dry powder for a period of many days. The exact length of time in the natron varied according to which period of Egyptian history the mummy belonged and according to the amount being spent on the process. Presumably, a rich family would spend more on preserving their family members.

A second thing necessary for mummification was the removal of the vital organs of the body. If these are left inside the person, they will speed decay. Thus, the Egyptian embalmers removed all of the abdominal organs except the heart, and also removed the brain.

This last procedure created a problem, however. The Egyptians were concerned about the body retaining its identity, and they did not want to harm the head or face in any way. They resolved this problem by unraveling and removing the brain through the nose with a sharp hook of some kind. Gruesome as this may sound, it worked rather well. After their removal, some of the organs were wrapped and placed inside containers in the tomb with the mummy. It was expected that they would be needed for a happy life in the next world!
There were of course, certain religious ceremonies that went along with the mummification process. Joseph, I am sure, would not have wanted any of these done for him, and, if he had any say in the matter, they were not done. But, after all this was accomplished, the body would be skillfully wrapped in spiced linen and placed in a coffin.

Next, the mummy would be entombed. In Joseph's case, instructions had been left to remove him from Egypt when his family went out of that land. It is, therefore, useless to look for the grave of Joseph in Egypt, since his body left Egypt at the time of the Exodus.

A final observation on Joseph's life and career: According to Genesis 50:26, Joseph was 110 years old at the time of his death. This age is interesting, since in ancient Egypt 110 was considered the perfect age at which to die (Aling 1981: 51, note 25). What happened to the Jewish people after Joseph's death? At first nothing happened. In the early verses of Exodus chapter 1, however, we see that a king rose up who knew nothing of Joseph. This personage was, I believe, a Hyksos Pharaoh.

The Hyksos were a foreign people from Syria-Palestine who ruled the northern portions of Egypt in the so-called Second Intermediate Period, ca. 1786-1570 BC.

That this king was a Hyksos is shown by a number of things. The Hebrew of Exodus 1:8 indicates a negative kind of rulership. Also, Exodus 1:9 states that the king had a fear that the Hebrews would outnumber his people. It is not realistic to believe that the Jews would ever become more numerous that the native population of Egypt; but they certainly could outnumber a ruling minority like the Hyksos.

Finally, in Exodus 1:11 we are told that the Hebrews, as slaves, labored at two cities: Pithom and Ramses. Pithom is not located yet with certainty, and is in any case not important for our discussion here.

But Ramses was the great delta capital under the Hyksos first and then later under King Ramses II of the 13th century BC. In Dynasty 18, ca. 1570-1325 BC, little or no major work went on there.* It seems certain, then that the Hebrews worked at Ramses during the Hyksos period.

The bondage of God's people lasted for many years. Joseph's accomplishments were forgotten for the time being, but were remembered and recorded in Jewish records, were to be written of by Moses, and were also to be rehearsed by uncounted generations to come.
As Joseph was not forgotten by the Jewish people, he is not forgotten by us. It is hoped that these brief articles have helped to make him a real person, set against the background of Egyptian history and civilization.

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ADAM AND ADAPA:  
TWO ANTHROPOLOGICAL CHARACTERS

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Because of the enormous impact of the Bible upon both the Jewish and Christian communities, any ancient Near Eastern literary discovery that may offer a parallel to some segment of biblical literature is greeted with interest. One such literary discovery is the Adapa myth. Its early discoverers and investigators claimed it as a true Babylonian parallel to the biblical story of Adam. However, after the initial flush of excitement, other voices arose to point out the differences between Adam and Adapa, claiming that no parallels exist between them. This position is retained in some of the more recent examinations of the material, but with the provision that some of the issues raised in the Adapa myth also occur in the biblical material. Finally, renewed attempts at showing an essential parallel between Adam and Adapa (with due allowances for functional shifts in the material) have been made. Such a "seesaw effect" of ancient Near Eastern parallels to the Bible is quite typical and suggests that the word "parallel,

though difficult to replace, may be inappropriate and quite inadequate to take account of the complex relationships that exist between biblical and extrabiblical literary traditions. It is the purpose of this essay to address that problem with specific reference to the Adapa myth.

1. Adapa and the Suggested Parallels with Adam

The Adapa myth tells a simple story about a wise man, Adapa, in the city of Eridu in southern Mesopotamia. He was created by Ea (Sumerian Enki), the god of the great deep and of the world of man, and served the city of Eridu and its temple with great devotion by, among other things, providing fish. Once a sailing mishap on a fishing expedition made him curse the south wind, thereby breaking its wing, whereupon the land was deprived of its cooling and moist breezes. For this offense he was summoned to the high god Anu (Sumerian An) to give account of his deed. First, however, he received this advice from his god Ea: (1) to appear in mourning garb at the gate of Anu so as to receive sympathetic assistance from the two heavenly gate keepers, Tammuz and Gizzida (vegetation gods); (2) to refuse the bread and water of death offered to him, but to accept oil for anointing himself and new garments. With this advice, which he followed carefully, Adapa succeeded admirably in his heavenly audience (to Anu's surprise), whereupon he was returned to earth (for he was but a man) with forgiveness for himself, release from feudal obligations for his city (Eridu), and healing for the illness which his offense had brought upon mankind.

Now we can turn to the so-called "parallels" between this story and the biblical story of Adam, notably Adam's fall (Gen. 3).


6 The best English translation is by E. A. Speiser in ANET, 101-103. Of the four extant fragments, three (A, C, D) derive from the Ashurbanipal library (7th cent. B.C.), and the fourth (B) comes from the Amarna archives (14th cent. B.C.).
(a) The name Adapa has a tantalizing similarity to that of Adam, a fact that has led to the suggestion that a simple phonetic development may explain their relationship, i.e., a labial shift from m to p, rather than vice versa. Moreover, the final ending a in Adapa also appears in the Hebrew 'adama, meaning "ground"/
"soil." Finally, a-da-ap is reported by E. Ebeling to occur in a syllabary text with the meaning "man." Whatever the merit of these linguistic considerations, the etymology of Adam is itself uncertain. Is it "soil"/"ground," ('adama) or "red" ('edom), or "blood" (dam)? As for the name Adapa, it appears frequently with the epithet "the learned, the wise," and is in fact now known to be the name of the first of the seven antediluvian sages (apkallu), each of whom is associated with an antediluvian king. Adapa is identified as the one who ascended to heaven, following the account of our myth in a text published by E. Reiner, who on the basis of the epithets apkallu and especially ummanu has
concluded that Adapa is to be identified as a "master craftsman" with reference to the scribal arts, hence a vizier.\textsuperscript{14} W. G. Lambert, however, has argued on the basis of another text that the epithet of Adapa should be read "umanna", and that its determinative produces a double name, Umanna-Adapa,\textsuperscript{15} which was transferred into Greek as the Oannes of Berossos.\textsuperscript{16} In fact, he suggests that adapa functioned as an epithet of Umanna (Oannes) with the meaning "wise."\textsuperscript{17} Since, however, this likely represents a secondary development of the meaning of this word, it consequently does not answer our question about etymology. At any rate, some etymological relationship between Adam and Adapa now seems likely, although any original meaning behind them both is not thereby elucidated. The functional meaning of Adam, namely "man" (\textit{homo sapiens}), may take us as closely as we can get to the names of our characters.

(b) Both Adam and Adapa were apparently tested with food (and drink, in the case of Adapa); and, according to some interpreters, both failed the test, hence the parallel between the two accounts. But whether Adapa in fact failed is a moot question. It would mean that he failed unwittingly by completely obeying his god Ea in refusing the bread and water of death, which actually turned out to be emblems of life. Ea, in turn, would have to be understood as deceiving Adapa by keeping divinity from him (making him refuse the heavenly food) for a selfish reason, namely that he wanted to retain the service of Adapa in Eridu.\textsuperscript{18} However,

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., pp. 8-9.
\textsuperscript{15} "A Catalogue of Texts and Authors," \textit{JCS} 16 (1962): 64.1.6; and p. 74. See also W. W. Hallo, "On the Antiquity of Sumerian Literature," \textit{JAOS} 83 (1963): 176.
this interpretation of the matter has met with some challenge from investigators who have warned against introducing into the myth the familiar concepts of temptation, deception, and fall.\textsuperscript{19} Another suggestion has it that Ea gave Adapa the best advice he knew regarding the bread and water, and that Adapa followed it obediently. This would imply that Ea underestimated the willingness of Anu to receive and pardon Adapa and hence unfortunately, unnecessarily, and perhaps unwittingly warned his protege about the presumed dangerous bread and water of heaven.\textsuperscript{20} But this explanation, as W. H. Shea rightly points out,\textsuperscript{21} is weakened by the fact that Ea everywhere appears as the god of wisdom, cleverness, and cunning, and that indeed at the very moment of giving his advice Ea is introduced as "he who knows what pertains to heaven."\textsuperscript{22}

A possible solution to this problem (i.e., how can wise and cunning Ea fail so miserably with his advice or be so deceptive with his favorite son?) would be that once again Ea was indeed right with his advice,\textsuperscript{23} that the bread and water of life would in fact become bread and water of death to a mere mortal,\textsuperscript{24} and that the unpredictable element in the Adapa crisis was Anu, who turned


\textsuperscript{21} Shea, pp. 33-34.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{ANET}, p. 101.

\textsuperscript{23} Ea (Enki) traditionally helped gods and humans in crisis situations. He restored Inanna from the underworld, reviving her with the water and grass of life (see T. Jacobsen, \textit{The Treasures of Darkness}, p. 58). He successfully warned Ziusudra/Utnapishtim about the coming flood and assured the survival of mankind (ibid., p. 114; \textit{ANET}, p. 93). He averted a rebellion among the lower gods by proposing and arranging the creation of man (W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, \textit{Atra-Hasis} [Oxford, 1969], p. 55). He solved the crisis caused by Apsu's rage by cleverly placing a spell over him and having him killed (\textit{ANET}, p. 61).

the tables on Ea in the matter of the food and who, by laughing at Adapa (B, line 70; D, line 3), showed himself to be the real culprit. In any case, the meal may not at all have been intended as a sacred investiture of Adapa into divinity, but merely a meal provided in response to the requirements of hospitality. But can a mortal accept such hospitality (including a robe and oil) to the extent of sharing the ambrosia and nectar with Anu? If this interpretation is at all correct, the heavenly food may at one and the same time be food of life and food of death, depending upon the one who eats it. A similar duality may be reflected in the biblical picture of the two trees: one of life, leading to eternal life (Gen 3:22); the other of knowledge, presumed to offer godlikeness, but actually leading to mortality (Gen. 3:3-5; 2:17).

25 Though Anu represents the highest authority in the world, he is not nearly so resourceful and calm as is Ea. A case in point is Anu's reaction to Adapa's offense: "Mercy! Rising from his throne: 'Let them fetch him hither!'" (ANET, p. 101). Again, he was apparently unable to face the threat of Tiamat (ANET, p. 63). Also, the Atra-Hasis myth finds him unable to propose a solution to Enlil's problem, namely, a rebellion among the lower gods (Lambert and Millard, Atra-Hasis, pp. 49-55). In general, Anu appears less resourceful and predictable than Ea, like a weak and insecure chairman of the board!

26 Thus Burrows, p. 24. The idea is that Anu, impressed with Adapa's power and skill, decided to include him among the gods—an old illustration of the maxim: If you can't beat them, join them (or make them join you).


28 According to Gen 2:9 the tree of life stood in the midst of the garden as did also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Gen 3:3 locates the forbidden tree in the midst of the garden, but does not otherwise name it, whereas Gen 3:22 speaks of the tree of life from which man must now be kept. Concerning the two trees, located at the same place, man is forbidden to eat from one, never commanded to eat from the other, but subsequently hindered from reaching it. The tree of life (plant of life) occurs relatively frequently in ancient Near Eastern literature (B. S. Childs, "Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life," IDB 4, 695-697), the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is practically unknown outside Genesis (see, however, M. Tserat, "The Two Trees in the Garden of Eden," Eretz-Israel 12 [1975]: 40-43). It is tempting to suppose that this "double tree" in the midst of the garden indicates two postures that man can take: (1) He can eat of one (presuming to be a god) and die, or (2) he can refuse to do so (remaining human), but staying alive with access to the other tree. He cannot eat from both.
From this it would follow that Ea's advice to Adapa, which proved valuable in every other respect, must also be taken in this sense with reference to the heavenly food. Ea does not deceive Adapa to keep him mortal and in his service in Eridu. He saves his life from what ordinarily would mean certain death through a presumption to be a god. If this is correct, the alleged parallel between Adapa and Adam over failing a test involving food falls away, but another emerges: Both were subject to a test involving food and both received two sets of advice; namely, "do not eat" (God and Ea) and "eat" (serpent and Anu). One, Adapa, obeyed and passed his test; the other, Adam, disobeyed and failed. But even this situation is complicated by a further consideration; namely, the relationship between obedience/disobedience and immortality.

(c) It is frequently suggested that Adapa, like Gilgamesh, sought immortality, that his visit before Anu was ill-fated by depriving him of his nearly realized quest (thanks to his blind obedience to Ea's deceptive advice), and that the Adapa myth is an etiology explaining human mortality.\(^{29}\) However, Adapa did not possess immortality originally (A, line 4);\(^{30}\) and no absolute proof exists that he sought it, but was hindered by Ea's schemes.\(^{31}\) Not even Anu's laughter and Adapa's return to earth, which is recorded in the late fragment D,\(^{32}\) necessarily implies forfeited immortality on the part of Adapa. Instead, it may indicate Anu's amused satisfaction over Adapa's wisdom and loyal obedience, which enables him to refuse that heavenly food, the acceptance of which would be an act of *hybris*. Hence he is rewarded with life on earth, rather than with punishment by death.\(^{33}\) At the most, the myth

\(^{29}\) Foster, pp. 352-353; Bohl, pp. 416-417.

\(^{30}\) The fundamental distinction between gods and men in the ancient Near East is precisely the inability of the latter to achieve immortality (with the exception of Utnapishtim, the hero of the Flood). Yet even the gods are not unalterably immortal, for they too depend upon eating and upon care and are vulnerable before a variety of adverse circumstances. Cf. Bohl, p. 426.

\(^{31}\) Recently Komoroczy, p. 38.

\(^{32}\) It comes from the Ashurbanipal library and is attributed to an Assyrian scribe. For the relationship between this fragment and the main fragment B (from the Amarna archives) see Bohl, pp. 427-429.

\(^{33}\) See Kienast, pp. 237-238; Komoroczy, pp. 38-39.
affirms that immortality is the privilege of the gods and cannot belong to man, even to the wisest of all. Here is a direct contrast between Adam and Adapa: Adapa is restrained by Ea from seeking immortality (presumptuously or even accidentally) in the court of Anu; Adam is restrained (unsuccessfully) from losing it. However, once Adam has lost his immortality, he too must be kept from seeking it anew (Gen 3:22f).

(d) Adam and Adapa are both summoned before the divinity to give account of their actions. Adam's offense is clearly that he broke the prohibition regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with the implication that in grasping for this knowledge he aspired for divinity. But what is Adapa's offense? On the basis of the presumed parallel with Gen 3, the answer has often been that like Adam so Adapa offended (unwittingly) in the matter of eating (and drinking), except that Adapa declined to eat where Adam declined to avoid eating. However, Adapa's non-eating can hardly be considered an offense at all, except possibly an offense by Ea to which fate made Adapa a party. If, on the other hand, the offense is defined as that which brought about the summons before the divinity, then Adapa's offense was clearly breaking the wing of the south wind. Three things may be observed concerning this act. First, Adapa broke the wind with a word. He clearly was in possession of magic power, something which may explain the incantation in fragment D employed to dispel illness. Second,

34 Foster, p. 353.
37 The role of fate appears to be prominent in some Mesopotamian traditions, perhaps because the gods were not always partial to virtue, but took advantage of it. Cf. Foster, p. 352.
38 Thus Jacobsen, "The Investiture and Anointing of Adapa," pp. 50-51; Foster, p. 349.
Adapa issued the curse while fishing in the service of the temple of Eridu, that is, while performing his religious duties. His anger over capsizing is directed not against his god Ea, who sent him out to sea, but against the wind that blew over his boat. In other words, he broke the wind in his eager devotion to Ea, possibly not counting the consequences vis-a-vis the land. Third, in breaking the wind, Adapa seriously disturbed the land (the world of southern Mesopotamia), and hence its high god Anu, who had authority over its maintenance. By maiming the south wind, Adapa halted the cooling life-giving breezes from the sea, leaving the land exposed to the scorching sun. G. Roux found in this condition an explanation of the presence of Tammuz and Gizzida (both fertility gods) at Anu's door. They suffered the lack of the fertile, moist wind and had sought help from Anu, who in turn inquired about the situation and upon being told cried, "Mercy!" (B, line 13) and sent for Adapa. It would also explain Ea's advice to Adapa that he approach the gate where the fertility gods were waiting, in mourning (over their miserable condition) so as to express his contrition and gain their sympathy and help. In that, Ea and Adapa were eminently successful. This success is indicated by Adapa's recognition before Anu, his acceptance of the signs of hospitality, which, very much to Anu's astonishment, he knew how to receive while discreetly refusing that to which he was not entitled (the heavenly bread and water). At this point a clear contrast with the story of Adam emerges, for excuses and a self-defense, not contrition and obedience, characterize Adam's confrontation with God.

39 See Kienast, p. 237.
40 G. Roux, "Adapa, le vent et l'eau," RA 55 (1961): 13-33. That only seven days are involved does not speak against this conclusion (thus Foster, p. 352), for the story is a myth in which realities are stylized into symbols.
41 Here I follow Jacobsen ("The Investiture and Anointing of Adapa," pp. 48-51; The Treasures of Darkness, p. 116) against Burrows ("Note on Adapa," p. 24). Adapa is not being invested as a heavenly being (only to lose it all by refusing his meal). Rather he is being accepted and forgiven of his offense, thanks to his contrition, caution, and the good offices of Tammuz and Gizzida.
42 According to fragment B, Anu laughs and says, "Take him away and return him to his earth" (B, line 70). The later Assyrian scribe responsible for fragment D
Although Adapa, unlike Adam, is not the first man on earth, he does represent mankind in a special sense. According to fragment A, line 6, he is a "model of men," a human archetype; and as B. R. Foster suggests, this particular aspect of Adapa's character identifies him as a wise man whose abilities extend in several directions. First, he is a sage whose superior knowledge given him by Ea makes him general supervisor of human activities in the city of Eridu. He bakes, cooks, prepares the offering, steers the ship, and catches the fish for the city (A, lines 10-18). Second, he is a vizier to the first antediluvian king, Alulim. Thus he is the first apkallu (antediluvian wise man) and as such is identified with the Oannes of Berossos, about whom it is reported that he daily ascended from the sea in the form of a fish and taught mankind the arts of civilization. Third, Adapa is wise in scholarship, having authored a literary work (unknown except in this fragmentary text). In consequence of these characteristics, Adapa became the epitome of wisdom and a model of it to later generations. When this fact is combined with his association with the first king, he is the typical man, even the primal man. Although unlike Adam, he is not the first man, still he is a sort of prototype, so that the matters pertaining to all mankind are explicable in reference to him (as, for instance, is apparently the case with regard to mortality, as portrayed in this myth). What Adapa does, or what he is, has consequences for subsequent generations of mankind, not because he passed on to them some form of original sin, but because through his wisdom offered this added explanation by attributing the following words to Anu: "Of the gods of heaven and earth, as many as there be, who (ever) gave such a command, so as to make his own command exceed the command of Anu?" (D, lines 5f.). Anu is surprised that his ruling in the matter had been anticipated and met with such a wise response—perhaps a little annoyed, as well, at being found out!

Foster, pp. 345-349.
See above, p. 182.
Jacoby, pp. 369-370.
See n. 17, above; also Xella, "L'inganno' di Ea nel mito di Adapa," pp. 260-261.
he was chosen to establish the context within which subsequent generations of mankind must live. Here a parallel as well as a contrast between Adapa and Adam emerges. Both are primal men, but the heritage which each one passes on to subsequent generations varies considerably.

2. Contrasts Between Adapa and Adam

From considerations such as the foregoing, it can only be concluded, so it would seem, that although the stories of Adapa and Adam exhibit some parallels (notably in regard to the name and primal position of the two chief characters), they also reveal important contrasts. Therefore, those interpreters who insist upon reading the Adapa myth without assistance from the familiar categories of Gen 3 do make an important and necessary point. The story of Adapa is a myth (or legend) set in the earliest time (antediluvian) of southern Mesopotamia, and it intends (perhaps in a somewhat whimsical way) to give expression to certain distressing situations. The most immediate of these concerns is human mortality. The response of the myth is that man cannot gain immortality, for that is the exclusive prerogative of the gods. Even Adapa, the foremost among men, after whom all mankind is patterned--with all his wisdom, skill, and power--cannot achieve it. Immortality, therefore, cannot be had by humans; it belongs exclusively to the gods, who alone are the ultimate rulers of the universe. Yet, the alternative to immortality is not death, but life on earth--temporal and subject to the fickles of fate, but not without satisfactions. To this life Adapa is returned, a wiser man who is aware of the distance between heaven and earth. "As Adapa from the horizon of heaven to the zenith of heaven cast a glance, he saw its awesomeness" (D, lines 7-8).

But more importantly, the myth concerns itself with human authority, even arrogance, before the gods. Here the myth is ambivalent. Obviously, Adapa's authority is being curtailed, for he

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49 Foster, p. 353. This point is made most forcefully in the Gilgamesh epic, during the conversation between Utnapishtim and Gilgamesh (Tablet XI; ANET, 93-96).
is summoned to give account of his action; but his wisdom, obedience, and cunning is such that he gets away with more than we would expect. He obtains a reception, life, and some trophies. This is possible because the gods, though immortal, are themselves vulnerable. They depend upon Adapa's provisions for the temple and are subject to his rash breaking of the south wind, thereby throwing the whole land into disarray. The liberation given to Eridu (D, line 10) may be a recognition of the fact that there are limits to the gods' dependence and reliance upon mankind.\textsuperscript{50} That the myth thereby becomes an exaltation of Eridu\textsuperscript{51} does not seem entirely persuasive.\textsuperscript{52}

However, just as the world of the gods is vulnerable, so is the world of humanity. The myth ends with a reference to illness which could permanently terminate even the limited and temporal existence of mankind. The healing promised through an appeal to the goddess Ninkarrak (D, lines 17-18) is appropriately attached to the myth of Adapa's successful confrontation with the gods. Just as the wing of the south wind, and hence life in land and city, can be healed, so also can human illness,\textsuperscript{53} through a proper relationship with the gods, who are both the rulers of the world and its providers of life.

In short, the myth of Adapa is an attempt to come to terms with the vicissitudes of human life, as it exists, by insisting that so it is ordained. It suggests that by wisdom, cunning, humility, and

\textsuperscript{50} This appears to be an issue in the Atra-Hasis flood story. The high gods set mankind to work in order to appease the low gods; subsequently mankind rebels and by its size frightens the high gods into sending a flood, whereupon they suffer from the lack of mankind's service. See Lambert and Millard, Atra-Hasis. The suggestion that the flood represents a disruption identifiable as an overpopulation problem only underscores the fact that the gods are vulnerable before their creatures and unable to control their own solution to their problem (see T. Freymer-Kensky, “The Atrahasis Epic and its Significance for our Understanding of Genesis 1-9,” BA 40 [1977]: 147-155).

\textsuperscript{51} Thus Komoroczy, pp. 39-40.

\textsuperscript{52} “Nicht die Stadt, sondern der Mensch und sein Erleben stehen im Mittelpunkt,” so Kienast, p. 235.

\textsuperscript{53} That it refers only to the healing of broken shoulder blades or arms, viz. the broken wing of the south wind, is not likely. For this suggestion see Bohl, p. 428.
obedience human beings can receive (or extract, if needs be) from the gods, who too are vulnerable, whatever concessions, short of immortality, will make life meaningful and satisfactory.

Gen 2-3, on the other hand, seeks to explain why existing conditions are what they clearly ought not to be. Therefore, Adam, unlike Adapa, is not struggling with distressing human problems such as immortality, nor is he strapped down with duties of providing for city and temple, nor is he caught up in the tension between his obligations to his God and hindrances to such obligations arising from an evil world or from inner wickedness. He is a natural creature whose simple lack, loneliness, is met in a fully satisfactory and permanent way (Gen 2:20-24). The only other potential difficulty in this harmonious existence lies in his capacity to disobey his God.

Moreover, not only in his existence before God, but also in his confrontation with God does Adam differ from Adapa. That confrontation arises from an experience of weakness in yielding to temptation, not from blind devotion, as in the case of Adapa. Also, Adam fails to manifest contrition similar to that of Adapa. And finally, again unlike Adapa, Adam refuses to take responsibility for his deed; he hides from it and subsequently blames his wife. Adam's fall is therefore much more serious than Adapa's offense, perhaps because of the considerable height from which Adam tumbled. Both the height of his former position and the depth of his present one are not parallel to those experienced by Adapa.

Even the nature of the relationship between man and God is different in Gen 2-3. God is not vulnerable before Adam, yet he

55 Ibid., pp. 66-74.
56 Contrary to J. Pedersen ("Wisdom and Immortality," p. 245), the fall of Adam thus does not parallel the experience of Adapa before Anu. To be sure, both Adam and Adapa made approaches towards divinity by means of wisdom, but Adapa did so from the position of human inadequacy. Adam, on the other hand, suffered no such lack. He enjoyed a relationship with his God through filial obedience and was in possession of all wisdom (cf. Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," p. 125).
appears hurt by Adam's fall and takes action in Adam's behalf (cf. Gen 3:21). Adam, on the other hand, is dependent upon God, but appears to ignore that fact (cf. Gen 3:8).

In short, then, we conclude that parallels do indeed exist between Adam and Adapa, but they are seriously blunted by the entirely different contexts in which they occur.

3. Analysis of the "Seesaw" Parallelism

How, then, shall we explain this "seesaw" parallelism? Does Adapa represent a parallel to the biblical Adam, or should Adam and Adapa rather be contrasted? The suggestion of this essay is that in Adam and Adapa we have the representation of two different anthropological characters, perhaps capable of being illustrated by an actor who plays two distinct roles, but who is clearly recognizable in each.

The Adapa character assigned to this actor is suitable for its cultural milieu. It is that of a wise man. The epithet *apkallu* supports it, and his identification with Berossos' Oannes confirms it. His wisdom is ordained by his god Ea, and it comes to expression in the devotion and obedience with which he conducts his affairs. Adapa is not a "sinner," but a "perfect man." He is therefore a model man, arising from the sea, like Oannes, to instruct mankind. He is a human archetype who compares best to such biblical personalities as Noah, Joseph, Moses, Job, and Daniel, who are also models of wisdom, devotion, and obedience, and who represent ideals to be imitated. Naturally, inasmuch as Adapa lives in a polytheistic world, so he must contend with all its conflicting interests. These are not unlike the conflicting interests with which biblical man is confronted, except that the perpetrators in the latter case are humans. For man to survive in such a world takes wisdom, integrity, reliability, devotion, and humility before the unalterable superiority of the divine powers. But the ideal human character can succeed in this. He may not achieve all that

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57 Cf. Foster, p. 353; Speiser, p. 310. According to Buccellati, p. 65, Adapa is characterized as a man of faith, and hence he can be compared to such biblical personages as Noah and Abraham. The notion of faith emerges in Adapa's total commitment to his god's counsel. See also Xella, p. 260.
he desires; he remains mortal and shares in the suffering to which humanity is liable, but he does stand to gain real satisfactions from his life and can attain to a noble status and enjoy divine recognition. Here is a clear parallel between Adapa and certain OT ideals, particularly in the wisdom literature.

The Adam role, however, is that of the first man, who is sinless and destined to immortality--of one who, even though a created being, is in the image of God and who enjoys his presence continually. We very much suspect that the same actor is indeed playing, because of the similarity of the names of our characters, because of their primary position among the antediluvians, and because of certain distinct experiences they had in common (e.g., a summons before divinity, and a test involving food). But the precise role which Adam plays is foreign to the Mesopotamian literature. Unlike Adapa, Adam, though made of clay, originally has the potential for immortality and is totally free before God. Further, Adam serves the earth, rather than temple. Moreover, although he possesses enormous wisdom (so as to name the animals, Gen 2:20), he is not portrayed as a teacher of civilization to mankind. Rather, he exists above and before civilization, in a pristine state of purity, nobility, and complete harmony. Furthermore, his confrontation with God is not in sorrow or mourning, comparable to the experience of Adapa; he is subsequently brought low while blaming his misadventures upon a woman. In this, Adam is clearly not an ideal to be followed, but a warning to all--a failing individual, rather than a noble, heroic one. Here a clear contrast emerges between our two characters.

According to an old proposal, the actor who played these two characters--the noble Adapa and the ignoble Adam--was brought to the ancient Near East by west Semitic peoples. On the scene staged by the Mesopotamian artists he characterized man as the noble, wise, reliable, and devoted, but humble, hero who is resigned to live responsibly before his god. However, in the biblical tradition, the characterization came through in quite a different way, which has put its lasting mark

59 See the recent suggestions by Shea, pp. 39-41; Dahood, pp. 271-276.
upon the concept of man in the Judeo-Christian tradition--namely, that before God, man is (or rather has become) basically sinful, failing, ignoble and untrustworthy, bent upon usurping the place of his God. This portrayal, to be sure, is not meant to reduce the spirit of man to pessimism and despair, but to remind him that despite all the wisdom, cunning, reliability, and devotion of which he is capable and is duty-bound to exercise, he is also always a sinner whose unpredictability, untrustworthiness, and irresponsibility can never be totally ignored nor denied.  

Does the Adapa myth then present us with a parallel or a contrast to the story of Adam? The best answer to this question may well be that Adam and Adapa represent two distinct characterizations of human nature. The parallels we have noted in the accounts may suggest that the two characterizations have a common origin, whereas the contrasts between them may indicate that two branches of Near Eastern civilization took clearly distinguishable sides in the dialogue over human nature. Yet these lines are not so different that the resulting two characterizations of man are unable to dialogue.

60 It would seem that W. Brueggemann, In Man We Trust (Atlanta, 1972), pp. 44-45, takes this aspect too lightly. He correctly observes that the purpose of the fall narrative is not "to dwell upon failure," but to affirm and reaffirm God's trust in man. But he further states, "The miracle grows larger, for Yahweh is willing to trust what is not trustworthy. The gospel out of the tenth century is not that David or Adam is trustworthy, but that he has been trusted" (ibid., p. 45). This is surely good theology, but it hardly succeeds in refurbishing man, as Brueggemann would have us do. The story of Adam's fall, it seems to me, insists that even at its best, mankind is not as good as it ought to be or as we might wish it to be.

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INTRODUCTION

Is There a Crisis?

Professor Kenneth Hare of the University of Toronto recently answered the question by dividing people and publications into 3 categories. First, and perhaps most vocal today, are the alarmists, many of whom are profiting immensely by writing and speaking on a kind of apocalyptic level, who see the technological society as having created a monster which, if unchecked, will swallow up both man and nature within a few short years. Hare suggests that much of this group's concern is with what he calls "nuisance pollution", i.e., the kind of thing like cloud or smog factors created by man in a city resulting in a slightly decreased aesthetic or comfort state, but hardly a major threat to life.

A second group consists of those who attempt to debunk the whole pollution effort. There is still land for more people, there are still many resources for development, and we have always been able to develop new methods and resources when the old were exhausted. After all, when coal supplies ran short, we hardly noticed the loss. Why not recognize that new forms of energy, new synthetic materials for construction, new ways of increasing our ability to feed ourselves, and new social structures making it possible for even greater,
numbers to live on this planet are all just around the corner?

In a third group (the golden mean) Hare places himself. His concern is with what he calls "transcendental" pollution--i.e., the relatively few but vitally important factors that affect not one area but the entire ecosphere. In such a category he would include the population explosion, the problem of non-renewable resources, and the problem of atmospheric and water pollutants now present in the world-wide system of the earth's surface. It is not my purpose to referee this debate. Rather, I should like to suggest that, whatever our view of the seriousness of the problem, there is an area in which we must develop a response. Even the most optimistic 'de-bunker' of the ecology crisis is functioning on the basis of a philosophy--usually a philosophy built on an unlimited confidence in man and his ability to control his own destiny. And, because our response inevitably involves values, and values in our Judeo-Christian society have always related to Biblical religion, I feel we can and should begin our search for a value-structure at that point. Especially for us, as evangelicals, there is a mandate for a fresh look at our sources, partially because they are under attack in ecological circles, but more basically because we purport to find in them "all things necessary for life and godliness".

What then does the Bible say to guide our response to the problems of ecology? Does it speak with a clear voice in favor of concern or does it, perchance, leave us in the embarrassing position of 'drop-out' from the company of the concerned, or worse yet, does it provide us with a mandate for exploitation of the worst sort? To these questions my paper will attempt an answer.

Approach to the Crisis: Ecological or Theological?

Perhaps at this point we should pause to consider the criticism of the "theological strategy" offered by
Prof. Richard Wright in a recent article. Dr. Wright suggests that an "ecological strategy" (i.e., educate people to see that a proper use of their environment is beneficial in terms of their own quality of life) is more effective than a theological one, as Christian churches have neither the ability to agree on a particular theological strategy, nor the ability to influence the secular majority in our society. The theological approach must be, therefore, merely a supplement to the more pragmatic, realistic appeal to self-preservation which secular man can understand.

I question whether one can separate the two, even to the limited extent proposed by Dr. Wright. If ecological decisions are to be made at all they must be made in the context of a human value system. Who is to say that self-preservation is a strong enough motive for action, especially when, for those in affluent parts of the world, it usually is a problem of assuring the next generation's survival not our own? What will convince the consumer of wood and paper, the traveler in his fume-spewing automobile, or the land-speculator protecting his investment that to modify his behavior severely is necessary? I suggest that a theological conviction, though traditionally limited in its appeal, may make more sense in the context of an increasingly apocalyptic debate than even the appeal to an enlightened self-interest. Though we may never convert the world, we may, as Christians, better set our own response and activity in the context of a Biblical worldview, and thus convince contemporary leaders to follow after what we believe is good. It was not, after all, through the conversion of all England that Granville Sharpe, William Wilberforce and John Newton brought about the end of child labor and the slave trade. It was rather by formulating a course of action growing out of a Christian world-view, convincing themselves and some influential contemporaries of its rightness, and
then seeking legislation on the subject. Thus, I opt for a theological approach. But, which theology shall we espouse? At least three options are available and I shall discuss them in turn.

Theological Approaches

1. **Attack the Judeo-Christian tradition.** Attacks on the Judeo-Christian tradition and its view of nature are by now familiar to most of us. Wright (and others) quotes Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* in which man's "bulldozer mentality" is traced to Genesis 1 and its alleged "sanction and injunction to conquer nature--the enemy, the threat to Jehovah". We shall have more to say presently about this kind of reasoning; suffice it to note for the moment that such a charge is certainly open to question, Biblically if not also historically.

2. **Modify the Judeo-Christian tradition.** Not all attacks on Biblical theology have come from outside the Christian church. It is significant that Lynn White, in some ways the father of modern discussion of the subject, recognized that the roots of the problem were religious and himself claims to be a faithful churchman. His thoughts on the subject have been reprinted in the Journal ASA and the questionable nature of their claim to represent Christian dogma faithfully has already been examined. However, it should be noted that many who claim to follow the Christian tradition are, in one way or another, supporting the contention made by White. A United Church minister in Vancouver recently called for a rejection of Genesis 1 as the basis of a new theology. On a more academic level, Frederick Elder, a Presbyterian minister, in his book *Crisis in Eden*, has zeroed in on the so-called "J" account of creation, as contained in Genesis 2:4b ff., with its anthropocentric view of the world, as the real culprit. Elder sees some hope for redemption in the "P" document from Ch. 1 (despite its offensive vv. 26-27), an account in which
man is at least placed on some equal level with other parts of creation. Man is at least chronologically last in the "P" version, in opposition to the "J" document wherein Adam is first to appear and he then names the animals (a very significant function in light of Hebrew psychology surrounding the name.)

Elder goes on to divide mankind, and especially theological mankind, into two groups. The "exclusionists", represented by such "traditional" Christians as Harvey Cox, Herbert Richardson, and Teilhard de Chardin, advocate the kind of anthropocentrism of Genesis 2. To them man is king, his technology represents the height of redemption from the old "sacred grove" concept, wherein God and nature were never distinguished, and his dominance of the physical world is but a step in the direction of the ultimate kingdom of
God. Of course, there are major differences among such thinkers as I have mentioned, and Elder would be the first to acknowledge such, but all have in common a view that God has somehow ordained that man shall be the master of nature and, as its despot (whether benevolent or otherwise is debated) does the work of God in subduction of what is basically a godless and hostile entity.

His second group, styled the "inclusionists", represents Elder himself, along with such Christian and marginally Christian thinkers as George H. Williams, McHarg, Rachel Carson, and Loren Eiseley. Theologically he finds roots of the position in Calvin and H. R. Niebuhr, in each of whom there is present that holy regard for Mother Earth that Rudolf Otto has called a "sense of the numinous".

Elder is suggesting that Christian theology must rid itself of its anthropocentrism and begin to see the earth as a self-contained biosphere in which man is little more than a plant parasite (to use McHarg's terminology). He must see himself no longer as custodian of but rather a "part" of the environment. Along with this de-throning, or more properly abdication, of the king of the earth, will come a fresh sense of man's worth as an individual, unique in his ability to perceive eternity in various forms of natural history, and set over against a view of man as the collective, the mechanical, the technical master of the world's fate. In short, there must remain in man that mysterious sense of wonder as he stands before the burning bush, though that bush be the heart of a simple seed.7

A critique of such a view must consider first whether it is Biblical and second, whether it has drawn adequate and accurate conclusions from the sources it has used. Turning to the second point first, I would contend that Otto's "sense of the numinous" is by no means restricted to persons with a so-called "biocentric" world view, nor
is there any real conflict between a truly Biblical anthropocentricity and the concern for ecology Elder sets forth as a goal. Certainly Calvin, for one, quoted by Elder as having an "inclusionist's" sense of wonder at creation, was firmly in the anthropocentric camp when he wrote "as it was chiefly for the sake of mankind that the world was made, we must look to this as the end which God has in view in the government of it." Although any attempt to see in Calvin the concerns of modern ecology is doomed beforehand, there is still here a valid example of what I should like to show as a Biblical anthropocentrism combined with the necessary attitudes for dealing with today's heightened concerns.

Elder's view has many other problems, but rather than offer a critique of Elder I will suggest a Biblical alternative. Let me say at the start that I am convinced that all talk of man's abdication, of a biospheric worldview, and of a sense of mere equality with the animal and plant world is not Biblical, Christian, or practical. In the appeal to St. Francis of Assisi, in the blur created between man and nature and in the almost personalization of the natural world one senses more than a hint of a pantheistic response. I suggest that, in a Biblical view, nature has a derived dignity as the separate and subordinate creation of a transcendent God. Man has his God-given role as under-Lord, as manager and keeper, and is possessed of a cultural mandate which includes submission of any hostile forces and just as importantly, dominion over friendly forces. In this he is a partner with God who created him and, were it not for the Fall into sin (which Elder and most theological writers on the subject seem to ignore), he might have brought about the kingdom of God on earth and found out the deepest secrets of his biosphere en route.
BIBLICAL VIEW

God

Any Biblical perspective on ecology must begin with a Biblical view of God. In this sense, a Biblical world view is really theocentric rather than either anthropocentric or biocentric. Significantly, Genesis 1 begins this point and I argue that any value system or truth structure without such a starting point must quickly reduce to subjectivity. The very extent to which nature is meaningful, whether in a pantheistic, animistic, or Christian sense, is a derivative of the view of God espoused. The God of the Bible is a God who is there prior to any and all creation. Though He can stoop to converse with his creatures (witness the anthropomorphisms of Genesis 2, to say nothing of the incarnation of Jesus Christ) he is still consistently presented as above and beyond any and all of his works. In a masterful summary delivered on the Areopagus in Athens, St. Paul said of this God that He made the world and everything in it (Acts 17:24). He is the source of life, breath and everything else and He is the determining force in created history, but never can be reduced to any spatial context that man can identify and enshrine. Thus, our love of nature must be in the context of it as the handiwork of the Almighty and not as some part of God (i.e., pantheism).

Such a view is important because it has not always been universally held, and we are in position to examine the results of alternate views. It should be self-evident that such a view of a Creator-God endows nature as well as man with a real dignity, but dignity for nature, at least, can also be derived from pantheism. But what are the implications if we lower God to the level of nature or raise nature to the level of God?

We have a model for this in the Babylonian view of the universe. "Enuma Elish", representing Babylonian cosmology in the 3rd and 2nd millenium before Christ,
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has the usual pagan pantheon, but the notable fact is
that the world was created out of certain gods and each
element in the universe furthermore represented the
personality and will of a particular deity. Thus, deriving
from its view of god, the society came to view nature
not as an "it" but a "Thou". Such language, reproduced
on a more sophisticated plane, and overlaid with a
residual Judeo-Christian world-view, is seen again in
many of Elder's favorite "inclusionists", and even Lynn
White himself seems to long for the good old days when
the groves were sacred.

For the Christian, however, God must be the God
of creation. The grove may be perceived as a wonder
of order and beauty, but it must never be given the
robe of divine dignity. Its meaning to man must be
derived from the fact of its createdness rather than its
essence. Its mystery must be that God has created it
and given it properties for man to study and marvel at,
but never worship or fear. For the Babylonians no such confidence in the grove existed. It was feared, not appreciated. It was irregular and capricious in its personality, not in any sense the ordered subject of scientific investigation we know today. It possessed a sense of authority, but even that authority was no guarantee against the sudden return of chaos. All of this, which we call cosmology, is clearly dependent on one's view of God, and I can hardly emphasize sufficiently the force and majesty of the Hebrew concept of a dependable and transcendent Creator as presented in Genesis chapter 1.

Nor is the transcendence of God absent in the so-called 2nd account of creation. In Genesis 2:4 we find God again completely in control of His work, creating (lit: "making"; Hebrew 'asah) the earth and the heavens. No primitive mythology is here; rather there is a God who can be close to his creation and even direct its affairs personally, but who Himself is above it, beyond it and outside it. Again the view of the world is theocentric rather than anthropocentric or biocentric. It is this God who tells Adam to till and keep the garden.

Nature

The inclusionists" tell us we must rid ourselves of Biblical views of nature and return to a kind of neopantheism, a resurrection of the sacred grove, which has to mean some kind of independent element of deity within the natural order. But what is the Biblical view? Is nature a worthless mass of material to be exploited and left to rot as man sates himself in luxury, while trampling underfoot his environment? Some would have us believe that this is the implication in Genesis 1:26-28. Elder attempts to convince us that the Biblical picture degrades nature at the expense of exalting man, but does the Genesis account actually reflect such a state of affairs?
We have already seen in both Genesis accounts that the created order is radically separate from God. Up to the sixth day, with its creation of man, each natural element brought into being finds its meaning in fulfilling a role cast for it in the benevolent order of things. Light dispels darkness and we have day. The firmament keeps the waters separated. The dry land provides a platform for vegetation which in turn feeds all the living creatures. The seas become in their turn an environment for the fish and swarming creatures. The two great lights rule (or give order to) the principle parts of the cycle: day and night. And finally man, as the highest of the created order, serves to keep all of the rest in order, functioning smoothly. In fact, it is in Genesis 1 with its penchant for order and its transcendent and over-arching concept of a purposeful universe, that a truly balanced cosmological system can be found—and this in the very document that is supposed to downgrade nature by its command for man to subdue and have dominion. In this document creation is seen as orderly (note the structure in the chapter), it is repeatedly stated to be good, and it is throughout seen to be serving a great and noble purpose.

Genesis 2 has relatively little to add, as it is, fundamentally, a treatise on the nature of man and his meaning in the structure. However, contrary again to what we might expect in an "anthropocentric" account Genesis 2 also argues for a healthy respect for environment. Indeed for most ecologists who concern themselves with the Bible at all, Genesis 2 is more palatable than Gen. 1. Here the garden is full of "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food" (v. 9). Here man's mandate is even expressed in more ecologically desirable terms. No longer is he to conquer and subdue, but rather to "till (lit: work) and guard (Hebr: shamar, keep)" the treasure entrusted to him. True, its value is cast in terms of its usefulness for man, but at least
one tree had a value totally separate from any use man was to make of it. Note however, that Harvey Cox and Herbert Richardson, with their anthropocentric universe, are really closer to the mark here than is Elder and his so-called "biocentrists", though neither has grasped the full fact that theocentrism must precede either second option. Cox and Richardson sometimes lose sight of the fact that it is the garden of God, not Adam, no matter how central Adam may appear in the story.

Further testimony to the value and wonder of nature is not wanting in other parts of scripture. There is the familiar and majestic Psalm 19, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork. . ." Add to this the prologue of Psalm 8--"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained--What is man. . ." Or Psalm 104, a marvelous Creation hymn in which nature's beauties are celebrated so graphically, but the whole is carefully set in a context pointing to man's utilization of nature as the real purpose of all its beauty and productivity. The springs in the valleys give drink to the beasts of the field and the earth is satisfied with the fruit of God's creative works. But all is ultimately for the service of man (v. 14) whether directly (as when man drinks water) or eventually (as in the wine and bread made from the plants which drink from the springs). Any suggestion that the relationship is exploitive or that nature is degraded by relegation to a utilitarian function is, of course, nonsensical. It is only when man's greed and lack of appreciation of his own proper role becomes a factor that nature is trampled underfoot. In fact, again nature's real meaning comes from her role in the sphere of created orders, and in her proper role she shines.

One final word should be said on the destiny of the natural world. Biblical theology is well aware that we
live in no pristine Garden of Eden and that we are not likely to restore such a paradise, as things now stand. The reasons for this I discuss in more detail presently. But the Biblical writers never lost sight of the fact that God's original purpose for nature was that it should freely reflect His glory in a state of untrammeled beauty. Man was, from the beginning, to be the center of this paradise, and all things were to function in a harmonious relationship to man. Thus, when the prophet Isaiah speaks of the new heavens and new earth, (ch. 65:17) his covenant includes terms for harmony within both plant and animal kingdom: vineyards bear fruit, wolf and lamb feed together and none hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain. This ideal of a cosmic element in redemption, combining the theme of creation from
Genesis and that of redemption from Exodus, is nowhere more pronounced than in the later chapters of Isaiah and is taken up in Paul's letter to the Romans, Ch. 8 vv. 19-25. There the whole creation is seen with an earnest or eager longing (lit: an uplifted head in expectation) for the day when she shall be freed from bondage and obtain liberty to function without her present decay. Just when this shall become a reality, and particularly the relation it has to our own environmental efforts, is not clear. What it does say is that God's purpose for the natural world is not abandoned, and the very "hope" which is here expressed for the natural order should lend continuing dignity to our efforts in the field of ecology. When we work to free nature from some of the effects of man's sin we are upholding that which is "good" in God's sight, and expressing a commitment to a program which will find its consummation in some form of eschatological kingdom of God. That we can never hope to complete the process no more renders the charge futile than does our inability to finally eliminate poverty, racism, broken homes, or disease. In fact, by the demonstration of a Christian concern we are witnesses to the continued expression of God's ultimate purposes in the world.

Man

The key to the discussion lies in a theology of man. We have already sensed that the fly in the ecological ointment is man himself--his greed, his self-centered economic motivation, his desire for the kind of "freedom" which regards any restraints as odious.

For the inclusionists the answer seems to be found in reducing man to the level of nature, in ridding him of this Biblical anthropocentrism where he sees himself as something inherently of more value than "many sparrows". My own, and I think the Bible's, answer lies in quite the opposite direction. Both creation accounts place man at the pinnacle of creation, whether in terms
of its climactic event (as in Ch. 1) or its primary intermediary (Ch. 2, in which man is first formed and then completes creation through his naming of the animals). In the former account he is given dominion which separates him from the animals and is thus a primary element in working out the *imago dei* within him. Thus, by his creation, he already represents the highest potential for biological development and we may not, with Loren Eiseley, expect that something greater may yet come along.

As the highest form of the created order, he is to be lord of nature, not part of it. Herein lies the origin of science and technology, and the inclusionists seem at times to be calling for a return to the state existing prior to the neolithic revolution, where man would again take his place as a gatherer and predator, but would abandon his role as organizer, producer, and planner. Such an option is, of course, a practical impossibility, as I'm sure most inclusionists would admit. We simply know too much science and technology, and furthermore we have the brainpower to duplicate the process again, even if rolled back to square zero by some catastrophic event.

But what are the Biblical restraints on man in his lordly role? I think herein lies the key. Herein is the forgotten element in most of human development, herein is the weakness in any truly anthropocentric world-view. For, as C. F. D. Moule has so cogently pointed out in his small but weighty book, *Man and Nature in the NT*, man is never seen just as lord, but as lord under God. Moule uses the term *vice-regent* or sub-manager. Man derives his meaning from God whose program, though it from the beginning offered man the kingdom, included a recognition of God's ultimate lordship over all creation and saw man as a responsible steward, not an independent tyrant. Every tree of the garden was given to man, but there were rules. Dominion was given (never, by the way, as a license to exploit
but it was dominion within (as Elder himself points out) a created order, the violation of which would naturally lead to imbalance and disaster. There is no such thing for Biblical man as unlimited freedom unlimited rights. His freedom is that of the operator of a beautifully functioning machine. As long as he treats the machine with respect and uses it in a way consistent with the functions and properties of the machine, he may continue to exercise his managerial function with no problems. But when he ignores the rules and decides he can ignore the complexities of his machine and the instructions left by its maker, his freedom is lost and he becomes the destroyer both of the machine and his own function as its lord.

Now man, through his overthrow of the rules (Biblically summarized in Genesis 3) has brought slavery both to himself and his universe. Of course, enough of God's image remains within him so that he can still exercise a powerful technical control and he can for a while appear to be creating a kingdom of his own quite independently of that kingdom promised "where dwelleth righteousness". But now the books on the city of man are beginning to be audited, and it appears that this city has one grave and mortal fault. It simply cannot overcome the selfish desires of its own citizens, even when those desires threaten to destroy the whole kingdom.

The options we are given are all insufficient. Ecologists (and Richard Wright) appeal to self-preservation but existence without meaning becomes a farce. Lynn White, Richard Means and others seem to be calling for man to abdicate his role as king of the world, but this would simply leave the whole process with no government.

I believe the only real solution is to restore the created order that freedom it lost, by freeing men from their bondage to sin and self and then showing how
they, in turn, may progressively set their environment free from the bondage into which it has been placed. This will demand a realistic view of man's problem and perhaps the Achilles Heel of almost all modern theological attempts at solution is that they discuss creation in terms of Gen. 1 and 2, but ignore Gen. 3.

In setting a man free Jesus Christ did not promise instant return to paradise. Though the head of the serpent has been bruised, thorns and thistles continue to come forth, I do not believe we will ever see a real ecological, or social harmony, until that day when the glorious liberty of the children of God shall become universal for all creation. But let us never forget that in Christ, we are already free, and we can, despite the weaknesses of the "flesh", began to demonstrate our freedom by applying it to the many institutions of our
social order. Christians have often failed to live as free
men (hence the continued presence of race prejudice
and materialism among us) but where they have
grasped the meaning of redemption (as witness the
Clapham Sect in England or the Abolitionist preachers
of New England), the effect on their world has been
magnificent. The kingdom of God still awaits an
eschatological consummation, but this has never pre-
vented citizens of that kingdom from acting out in this
kingdom the principles of that other. And the unique
Biblical fact is that in some mysterious sense, that new
order, the new heaven and the new earth, seem to be
a re-creation or restoration of that order we now know!
What exactly is the connection I cannot tell, but the
very fact of the identification lends tremendous force
and dignity to my weakest efforts at freeing this order
from its bondage to sin.

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ATRA-HASIS: A SURVEY

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New discoveries continue to revive interest in the study of the ancient Near East. The recent collation and publication of the Atra-hasis Epic is a very significant example of the vigor of this field, especially as the ancient Near East is brought into comparison with the Old Testament. The epic is a literary form of Sumero-Babylonian traditions about the creation and early history of man, and the Flood. It is a story that not only bears upon the famous Gilgamesh Epic, but also needs to be compared to the narrative of the Genesis Flood in the Old Testament. The implications inherent in the study of such an epic as Atra-hasis must certainly impinge on scholars' understanding of earth origins and geology.

The advance in research that has been conducted relative to Atra-hasis is graphically apparent when one examines the (ca. 1955) rendering by Speiser in comparison with the present volume by Lambert and Millard.

Although Atra-hasis deals with both creation and flood, the present writer has set out to give his attention to the flood material only. Literature on mythological genres is voluminous. Therefore the present writer will limit this study to a survey of the source material which underlies Atra-hasis, a discussion of its content and its relation to the Old Testament and the Gilgamesh Epic.

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The source material behind the present edition has been a long time in coming to the fore. The great amount of energies that have been expended on this research will hardly be reflected in this brief study; however, the main lines of endeavor can be traced.

One may surmise that the Atra-hasis epic flourished in Babylonian civilization for some 1,500 years. At the time of Alexander the Great, when Hellenism figuratively and literally buried what was left of Mesopotamian cultural influence in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, Atra-hasis was lost. For over two thousand years the only record known to man of a great Flood was the story in Genesis. Berossus, a Babylonian priest about the time of Alexander, wrote a Babylonian history which is also lost. Fragmented traditions of his history have come down to the present through such worthies as Polyhistor and Eusebius.

The middle of the nineteenth century saw the beginning of serious exploration in Mesopotamia, particularly among British and French interests. Reliefs and monuments were unearthed and taken to Western museums. Thousands of clay tablets awaited decipherment, an interesting process in its own right. Kuyunjik, the larger mound at Nineveh, is the site where much Atra-hasis material was found, although its identification was not apparent for a long time. In 1842/3 Paul Emile Botta first dug at Kuyunjik, but he did not find any spectacular museum pieces such as were expected in those days. Austen Henry Layard secured British rights to dig in the area and this caused a conflict with French interests. By 1851 the palace of Sennacherib had been found. Hormuzd Rassam, a Christian of local extraction, who favored the British, became the leader of native digging efforts. At first he and his helpers dug secretly at night. Having come across the most magnificent reliefs found to date, Rassam continued digging by day. They had dug into the palace of Assyria's last great king, Ashurbanipal. His library is now well known as one of the great discoveries from antiquity. Practically all of Ashurbanipal's library was taken to the British Museum, thanks to Layard and Rassam.

In London a "layman" in scholarly circles was put to work sorting the fragments of Ashurbanipal's collection. This man was George Smith. At fourteen the humble lad was apprenticed to a firm of banknote engravers. From an Old Testament background, his first love soon took over in his life as he read with diligence concerning the archaeology of Mesopotamia. He gave up engraving for archaeology before long, and soon was at work collating the thousands of fragments of Ashurbanipal's library. In his own words, Smith mentions with kindness the labors of Botta. Botta found Sargon's palace (which dated from
Others knew that works of mythology were preserved, but only George Smith collected and joined enough broken pieces to reconstruct entire episodes, and only he could understand the content. His lack of philological training was made up for by hard work and sheer genius.  

It was on December 3, 1872, nearly one hundred years ago, that Smith read a paper to the Society of Biblical Archaeology concerning his discovery of a Babylonian version of the Biblical Flood story. This paper rocked the world of Biblical scholarship. Four years later Smith published The Chaldean Account of Genesis, and among this selection of Babylonian literary texts was one Smith called "the story of Atarpi." This is now known as the Epic of Atra-hasis.

An amazing feature of the story of the gathering of the fragments that make up Atra-hasis is the unusual length of time required to join the fragments properly. Smith had three broken pieces, enough to gain a plot and to distinguish this from other creation/flood stories. Smith mistook obverse for reverse and his mistake was not corrected properly until 1956. Even more amazing is the fact that, after Smith's untimely death in 1876, the three "Atarpi" fragments became separated and were not joined again until 1899, and the third of the pieces was not published until 1965, and not joined to the other two until 1967. This is the reason that Atra-hasis is spoken of as a "new" flood epic: it is new because its tablet sequence has only recently been finalized.

Other fragments of Atra-hasis naturally experienced independent histories from their discovery to their publication. V. Scheil, a French priest, published a fragment of a flood epic in 1898. His differed from Smith's, and he dated it to the reign of Ammi-saduqa (1646-26 B. C.) of the Old Babylonian dynasty. The same year a mythological text from the same period was copied by T. G. Pinches. This last text describes the creation of man. In 1899, the German scholar, Heinrich Zimmern wrote an article in which he gave the Umschrift of Smith's two then available fragments, showed Scheil's and Pinches' work was of the same epic, and demonstrated that the name of the hero should be not Atarpi, but Atra, or Atra-hasis. Still at this point the correct order of the fragments was undetermined, and so the matter remained for fifty years.
It remained for the Danish scholar, Jorgen Laessoe, to point out the proper sequence. Lambert and Millard take credit for publishing material done by the same original scribe who wrote Scheil's 1898 fragment. This material had been in the British Museum since 1889.

CONTENT OF THE EPIC

By way of definition, the Epic of Atra-hasis is more a literary tradition than a narrative with precise bounds and limits. Lambert states that plagiarism and a lack of respect for literary rights were common in the ancient world. The only "title" that Atra-hasis had in antiquity is seen repeated in the colophon at the end of each tablet, inuma ilu awilum, "When the gods like man."

The principal edition used by Lambert was copied out by Ku-Aya, "the junior scribe." This fact is also discernible in the colophons. Scheil in 1898 had given the name as Ellet-Aya or Mulil-Aya; neither of these is acceptable. It is known that ku + divine name is Sumerian. At one time there was some question about ku in Old Babylonian, but this sign is found in the Code of Hammurapi as well as in Ammisdudqa's own famous "Edict." Ku-Aya's text is not that of a schoolboy, even though he is called "junior scribe." He did his copying ca. 1630 B.C., if one holds to the "middle chronology," the majority opinion, on Babylonian chronology. The original must be before 1630 B.C., making Atra-hasis one of the oldest, practically complete texts now known. Ku-Aya's work is an edition in three tablets. Other collated pieces must be relegated to much later periods, to the late Assyrian (ca. 700-650 B.C.) in particular. George Smith's "story of Atarpi," now brought into comparison with the other pieces, must be of the Assyrian Recension, according to Lambert, since it shows marked Assyrian dialectal forms. The distinction between Old Babylonian and Middle Assyrian would show up in the orthography as well. The Assyrian story is essentially the same as Ku-Aya's, but substantially rewritten, Neo-Babylonian fragments differ even more. A Ras Shamra fragment, written in Akkadian, not Ugaritic, has been found, and is included in Lambert. Its first three lines read:

\[
\begin{align*}
e-nu-ma\text{ }ilana\text{ }\text{mes} & \text{ im-tas-ku}\text{ mil-ka\ i-na\ matati\ mes.ti} \\
a-bu-ba\text{ is-ku-nu}\text{ \ i-na\ ki-ib-ra-ti} \\
\end{align*}
\]

The translation is:

"When the gods took counsel in the lands,
And brought about a flood in the regions of the world."
The sixth line reads:

mat-ra-am-ha-si-sum-me a-na-ku-[ma], "I am Atra-hasis."

As to the theme of the text, the essence of its content, one must categorize it as both a myth because gods play a dominant role, and an epic, because the leading character is a hero. Most basically Atra-hasis deals with the problem of organization. A certain dialectic goes on here, viz., there is a conflict which goes through two phases. Both phases feature supernatural forces, but in the first "act" the conflict is among the gods for their own sakes and has to do with divine goals; the second phase concerns the conflict of the gods for the sake of man, i. e., human organization enters the picture.

Tablet I

The story begins with a hearkening back to an earlier time. It almost has a "once upon a time" flavor. Certainly the plot is etiological from the outset. "How did man become as he is?" "Once it was like this," the modern storyteller might commence. Once the gods, those superhuman reflections of man's aspirations, worked and suffered as men do now. Quite understandably, since Mesopotamia has always depended upon man-made waterways to redistribute the capricious floodings, the gods are represented as digging the canals. This was at a time when only the gods inhabited the universe. The greater and lesser gods are mentioned in 11. 5-6. The seven great Anunnaki are mentioned. The term is used for all gods at times; at other periods the Anunnaki are the gods of the nether world. Three senior gods are mentioned individually. They are Anu, Enlil and Enki. In 1:12 they evidently cast lots to determine their particular spheres of influence. Anu rules henceforth from heaven; Enlil evidently stayed on earth; Enki descended to his abode in the Apsu, a subterranean body of water. The Assyrian recension of the epic from 1:19 ff. probably indicates that Enki set the Igigi (here, junior gods) to work on the canals. The Igigi suffered this humiliation for forty years and then rebelled, "backbiting, grumbling in the excavation" (1:39b-40). They agree to take their mutual grievance to Enlil. They want not just reduction of their workload, but complete relief from it. In typically anarchous fashion the junior gods set fire to their digging tools, and utilize them as torches to light their way to Enlil by night. They surround Enil's temple, called Ekur, in the city of Nippur. Enil's servants, Kalkal and Nusku, bring word to the god that he is surrounded. Lines 93 and 95 of this first tablet are a little unclear. Lambert believes some kind of proverbial usage of the word binu/bunu, "son" is employed. If this term were clear, it might be more readily apparent why Enlil does not hesitate to
summon Anu from heaven and Enki from the Apsu to stand with him against the rebels. It must be assumed that the gravity of the situation was reason enough for a coalition of the senior gods to deal with the matter. It is Anu in 1:111 who seems to be the supreme leader. The question is put to the rebels, "Who is the instigator of battle?" (11. 128, 140). The answer comes: "Every single one of us..." (1. 146). When Enlil heard that the extent of the antagonism toward him in his realm, earth, was so great, he cried (1:167).

It is curious that Enlil seems to recover his composure so quickly and begins to command Anu to go to heaven and bring down one god and have him put to death as a solution to the problem. Perhaps more might be known about the decision to slay a god, if it were not for the fact that right at this juncture (11. 178-89), the text is unclear, and the various recensions must be used to fill the gap. At any rate, when the text resumes, Belet-ili is on hand. It is she who is summoned to create the "Lullu-man." Man now will bear the work burden of the gods. Belet-ili is called Mami in 1:193, and then it would seem that she is also called Nintu. Though she is the birth-goddess, she disavows any claim to being able to "make things." She points to the skill of Enki in that realm. But in 1:203 it becomes apparent that Enki must give her the clay so that she can create man.

Enki will make a purifying bath. One god will be killed; this is one called We-ila (1:223). He is not mentioned but this once in the text. His flesh and blood, combined with Enki's clay will result in man. God and clay, therefore, are mixed to make man in the Babylonian conception. Line 215 is instructive: "Let there be a spirit from the god's flesh." The plan to make a man is agreed upon by the Anunnaki, the plan is carried out, and the Igigi spit on the clay. Mami then rehearses before the gods in typically redundant, oriental fashion what she has done. The sumnum bonum of her work is this: the gods are free. Yet, strangely, the work is not complete, because more birth-goddesses, fourteen, are called in on the project and the group proceeds to the bit simti, "the house of destiny" (1:249) to get at the work in earnest. So the creation of man is not too clear. Fourteen pieces of clay designated as seven males and seven females, are "nipped off," and separated by a "brick." (1:256, 259). Another break in the story occurs here. Then there are some rules for midwifery in the Assyrian recension that fills the gap. Ten months is the time necessary before the mortals are born. Finally they are born and the text relates some rules about obstetrics and marriage, but it is not particularly clear until 1:352.

At this point the significant statement is made. "Twelve hundred years had not yet passed." This sentence begins the second part in
the plot, if one views its story content apart from the tablet divisions. This much time, twelve hundred years, is given as the span of time from man's creation to the Flood. During this period people multiplied and their noise became intolerable to Enlil, who becomes dissatisfied with the noise because he cannot sleep. ". . . Let there be plague," reads the last part of 1:360. Enlil has decided to reduce the noise by reducing the source, man. Namtara, the plague god, is summoned (1:380), but first, the reader is startled by the abrupt introduction of Atra-hasis, the king (1:364). Perhaps he has been mentioned in some lost portion earlier. He must be a king because his personal god was Enki himself. Usually a Babylonian's personal god was a very minor deity. This is seen in much of the wisdom literature and prayers. Enki is one of the chief gods; Atra-hasis must be a king. Atra-hasis petitions Enki to intervene and stop the plague. Enki advises the people to direct their attentions to Namtara, so that he will relax the plague. This is what then ensues as Tablet I closes with the statement repeated, "Twelve hundred years had not yet passed." 42

Tablet II

The sequence that ended Tablet I is now paralleled. Enlil lost his sleep again, and decides to use drought/famine to eradicate men. Adad the storm god should withhold his rain (11:11); waters should not arise: from the abyss. Again Atra-hasis entreated Enki and at length Adad watered the earth, Lambert says, "discreetly. . . without attracting Enlil's attention." 44

From this point on in the epic the gaps frequently hide the story development. Evidently Enlil slept again but was roused by a third visitation of noise. By now Enlil must realize that some god is thwarting his extermination plans. Enlil resumes the drought. In column 3, 4 Atra-hasis is praying to Enki. By column 4 the famine is still in progress. Enki acts in the behalf of Atra-hasis in column 5. A late Babylonian piece inserted here tells of a cosmic sea that existed in the bottom of the universe. 46 From this area, fish were caught up in a type of whirlwind, and the second drought perpetrated by Enlil was averted by the sending of these fish among starving mankind. Enlil by now is tired of seeing his plans frustrated. Enki has been his adversary, he surmises. Since water (and fish) was used to save humanity this last time, water will be man's destruction, and Enki is sworn to an oath not to interfere in Enlil's plan. It would seem at this juncture Lulu-awilum, puny man, is doomed.

Tablet III

This last tablet contains the flood story itself. Lambert observes
that "the version known to George Smith from Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic is in fact largely derived from the account in Atra-hasis."³⁴⁷

Fortunately, Ku-Aya's Old Babylonian text is the main source of the third tablet. Atra-hasis is addressing Enki as it begins. It would seem that Enki, as is so typical of polytheistic morality, has already found a way to get around his oath to Enlil. 111:1:18 begins Enki's message for avoiding the flood, and it has a familiar ring: "Wall, listen, to me! Reed wall, observe my words!"³⁴⁸ Atra-hasis is told to destroy his house, undoubtedly made of reeds, and build a boat.³⁴⁹ Reeds grow particularly in southern Mesopotamia, near the Persian Gulf. Perhaps the story originated in such an environment. Interesting nautical terms are employed in 11. 29-37. Concerning the boat:

Roof it over like the Apsu.
So that the sun⁵⁰ shall not see inside it
Let it be roofed over above and below.
The tackle should be very strong.
Let the pitch be tough, and so give( the boat) strength.
It will rain down upon you here
An abundance of birds, a profusion of fishes.
He opened the water-clock and filled it;
He announced to him the coming of the flood⁵¹ for the seventh night.

Atra-hasis did as Enki commanded him. The reason for the flood is given "theologically" in the fact that the two gods of the earth and the deep are angry with one another. This sounds primitive indeed. Since Atra-hasis is a devotee of Enki, he must side with him and no longer live in Enlil's earth.

Column 2 of the third tablet is badly broken. It would seem the boat is being built by such as a "carpenter" and a "reed worker."⁵² By line 32 of this column, clean and fat animals are mentioned as being put on the boat. And, then, in the lines remaining of the column, the most personal touch in the poem is given. Atra-hasis must go to live with his own god. He calls for a banquet for his people and his family. Yet he cannot enjoy or even participate in this festivity because he is overcome with grief in contemplating the impending horror. At the banquet he was "in and out: he could not sit, could not crouch" (1.45). His heart was broken instead and he was vomiting.

By now the weather worsened. Adad's thunders being heard in the clouds overhead. Pitch was brought to enable Atra-hasis to close his door. The winds and the waves rose. He cut his restraining hawser and set his reed-boat adrift.
Lines are missing at the beginning of column 3 of tablet III. Restored by conjecture is the mention of the Zu bird in line 7. Zu is mentioned again in one of the recensions.\textsuperscript{53} and is also found elsewhere in ancient Near Eastern mythology.\textsuperscript{54} The strength of the flood came upon the peoples; its destruction was a nightmare. Enki took it badly from the outset. The birth-goddess Nintu\textsuperscript{55} and the Anunnaki regret the disaster. Nintu bewails the loss of her children, who have become "like" flies.\textsuperscript{56} She seems to have lost her purpose for existence. She rightly blames Enlil for such a lamentable act. Her crying is enunciated in 111:4:5-11. The gods thirsted during the flood, as if they could no more subsist on salt water from the Apsu than could humans. Nintu wanted beer in fact in 111:4:16. The gods stood like sheep standing together in a dry trough waiting for a drink.\textsuperscript{57}

Seven days and seven nights the deluge continued. As column 5 is missing its first 29 lines, the flood itself is over at III:5:30. Atra-hasis is "providing food" (line 32), and as the gods smell the food. "they gathered like flies over the offering." This last statement is hardly very flattering to the gods, and most typical of the skepticism of the wisdom genre in Babylonian literature. After the god's repast. Nintu arises and complains concerning the unknown whereabouts of both Anu and Enlil. Since they are the instigators of this terrible calamity, where are they? The question is not immediately answered. Instead an etiological explanation is given on flies, telling of the manufactured flies in the jewelry of lapis worn around the necks of Mesopotamian deities. The reason for this episode is given by Lambert:

Thus the flies in the story are a memorial of the drowned offspring of Belet-ili, and the idea may have been suggested to its originator by a proverb or cliche about dragon-flies drifting down the river.\textsuperscript{59}

Enlil, who now has appeared, sees the reed boat and becomes angry at the Igigi. After all, the gods had decided to exterminate man; all the gods were under oath. How did man survive? Enlil wants to know. Anu points out that only Enki, whose realm is the sea, could save man. Enki steps forward and freely admits his deeds and evidently seeks to be exonerated (in a badly damaged passage). Volume 7 is of no help in the flood story; its chief concern is proverbial sayings on childbearing. Column 8 begins at the ninth line: this is the epilogue. The text is so problematic that it is not certain who is speaking in III:8:9-18. Lambert thinks the mother goddess is a leading candidate. In line 15 the whole epic is perhaps called anniam zamara, "this song."\textsuperscript{60} Perhaps the song was recited in some way in Babylonian religious worship.\textsuperscript{61} Thus ends the last tablet.
RELATION TO GILGAMESH XI

Still foremost in size and state of preservation among Akkadian epic selections are the twelve tablets (containing over 3,000 lines) of the Epic of Gilgamesh. The eleventh tablet here deals with the Flood.

Gilgamesh meets the figure who is synonymous with Atra-hasis of the recent epic, Utnapishtim. The latter is called "the Faraway" or "the Distant" because he dwells removed from others, he is immortal. Gilgamesh had thought in Utnapishtim he would find one prepared for battle, but he lies indolent upon his back (line 6). Gilgamesh has long sought immortality and he asks the serene Utnapishtim how he attained the blessed state.

Utnapishtim will tell Gilgamesh a secret which begins in Shuruppak, the city where the gods lived. There the hearts of the gods led them to produce the flood. The gods present are the same as those in Atra-hasis, among whom are Anu, who is called abasunu, "their father," and Enlil, who is denominated maliksunu, "their-counselor." Ninigiku-Ea is present. This name is another appellative of Enki the god of wisdom who dwells in the Apsu. As in Atra-hasis. Enki/Ea speaks to the house of reeds, Utnapishtim's home:

Reed-hut, reed-hut! Wall, wall!
Reed-hut, hearken! Wall, reflect!
Man of Shuruppak, son of Ubar-tutu,
Tear down (this) house, build a ship!

Thus in both epics the command to build a boat in order to escape the flood is similar. The seed of all living creatures is called to go up into the ship. Dimensions are not given for the ship in Atra-hasis; however, Gilgamesh mentions that the ship should be accurately measured, and that the width and length of the boat are to be equal, or square. Finally, the boat should be covered, ceiled over like the Apsu, i.e., impenetrable.

Like Atra-hasis, Utnapishtim pledges to carry out Enki's orders. He must sever his tie with Enlil's terrestrial economy and go to his own god, Enki.

There is a large break in the left margin of the tablet that extends from about line 41 to the center at about 45, and then proceeds to the center of 55 and angles back to reveal the first sign of 53. A lesser break at the right side extends over lines 48-53.

Children brought pitch for Utnapishtim's boat. The "strong"
or the "grown ones" brought all else needful. The floor space of the boat is said to be about 3,600 square meters, or approximately an acre. The walls were 120 cubits high, the decks were 120 cubits on a side. The boat had six decks. Speiser conjectures that the ship took seven days to build from his restoration of line 76.

Utnapishtim's family, the beasts of the field, and all the craftsmen were made to go on board the ship. This is a greater number than Atra-hasis. The rain that is coming is called by Speiser "a rain of blight." It was Enki's water-clock that was set for Atra-hasis. Here it is Shamash, the sun god, who sets the time of the flood. Adad's thunders signal the approaching deluge. Nergal, god of the underworld, tears out the posts of the world dam, letting the waters loose. There must be a connection between Atra-hasis 111:3:9-10 and Gilgames XI:107, where in both cases it is stated that the land was shattered like a pot. This must have reference to a cataclysmic force, something of diastrophism. Countless other examples could be given of this kind of parallelism between the two epics. Cataclysmic language is repeated in Speiser's rendition of line 109, "submerging the mountains."

The gods cowered during the storm in typically mortal fashion. Ishtar seems to take the role of the Mami/Belet-ili/Nintu birth-goddess in Gilgamesh. It is she that laments the sad state of things and blames herself.

On the seventh day the flood ceased. All of mankind had returned to clay. The ship comes to rest on Mt. Nisir. Utnapishtim sends forth first a dove, then a swallow and lastly a raven, which does not return to the ship. Thereupon he lets out all his "passengers" to the four winds, and offers a sacrifice. The gods, smelling the aroma as in Atra-hasis, "crowded like flies about the sacrificer." Ishtar and the jewels are brought into the context here too, with the idea that the jewels are a memorial remembering the flood. Enlil is excluded because he perpetrated the crime.

Utnapishtim is specifically called Atra-hasis, "the exceedingly wise," in line 187. Enlil seems to abate some of his anger and by 11. 193-4, he pronounces a blessing upon the Babylonian Noah and his wife:

"Hitherto Utnapishtim has been but a man;
But now Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like unto us gods."
Thus the close similarities can be seen between Atra-hasis and Gilgamesh XI. As has been said Atra-hasis is the older of the two, its copy dating from the Old Babylonian with an archetype perhaps as early as ca. 1800 B.C. Both compositions are part myth and part epic. Both show the marks of wisdom literature in their themes of introspection. It must be remembered both heroes are "wise men." Simply because it is longer and better preserved at key points of flood-story interest, Gilgamesh remains the more detailed document on the flood.

RELATION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

In Genesis 6:5-9; 19 the author of the Book of Genesis, Moses, writes concerning God's judgment of the world by a flood. Immediately one is struck by the solemnity of the story: יְהֹוָה אָדֹנָי, "the Lord/Jehovah saw" the wickedness of man. There is no pantheon of gods conniving against one another. There is no "noise" prompting the destruction by the flood. The God of Heaven is hardly dismayed over all, the noise men may make. The problem here in Genesis is not organization or the lack of it, the problem is that "every imagination of the thoughts" of man "was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Such a world wide problem as moral corruption is so vastly more realistic than noise.

In 6:14 God tells Noah to build a יָם נִיצָב, "an ark." The ark will be of sturdier construction than mere reeds: it will be of כֶּפֶר, "gopher wood." The ark will be covered with כָּפֶר וֹקֶר, "pitch." The dimensions of Noah's ark are superior as well. It is not square but more boatshaped. All three accounts speak of the boat, the pitch and the door. God promises deliverance to Noah in 6:17; Enki indicates that Atra-hasis will "save life," if he escapes as planned. Only in the Biblical account is the number of animals to be brought into the ark realistic. The tablet is marred in Atra-hasis 111:3:32 ff., but indiscriminate numbers of birds (?), cattle (?) and other wild creatures (?), plus Atra-basis' family, go on board. The "clean beast" of Genesis 7:2 may be reflected in the לְלִית of III:2:32.

The duration of the actual rain is more realistic also. Forty days and nights are cataclysmic duration on a world-wide scale. Six or seven days is far less believable. The flood of Genesis lasted 371 days. With the words of Genesis 7:11, כָּל עָתָה, הָיוּ בָאָרֶץ כָּל הָאָרֶץ, המִים נַעֲמִיתוֹ, the action and extent of the flood are clear. The niphal verbs here show that these natural
forces were acted upon by an outside Agent, God. One might assume that Enki's Apsu erupted adding to the waters, but the only clear statements have to do with Adad's roaring in the clouds, e.g., in III:2:49, 53 of Atra-hasis.

The closing of the boat's door is treated variously. Genesis 7:16 states simply, יִבְרֹא יְהוָה, כֵּן. What obliging soul brought the kupru ("pitch") for Atra-hasis to close his door?\(^{94}\) Then that one was swept away in the flood?

Very little is said about the amount and the subsequent assuaging of the waters. Even if this is the case, it is a little difficult to see how one could say of Gilgamesh XI that it portrays a local flood, since the mountains were submerged. That claim is better supported with respect to Atra-hasis, but chiefly from silence, because the latter does not give any real clue as to the extent of the flood.

The destruction of man and beast is deemed complete, however. This would imply a universal catastrophe for both Atra-hasis and Gilgamesh. All flesh died; the waters had to seek out all, in effect. Genesis 7:21-23 is most plain on this point.

Atra-hasis III:5:30 may have a reference to the sending of some kind of bird to find dry land.\(^ {95}\) Gilgamesh clearly indicates a dove, swallow and raven, while Genesis employs a raven and a dove. Atra-hasis does not give the place of the ark's landing. Mt. Nisir should be identified with Pir Omar Gudrun in Kurdistan, according to Speiser.\(^ {96}\) Ararat (אֲרָרָת, Ararat) has generally been thought to coincide with the mountain of that name in what was ancient Urartu, the region of Lake Van.\(^ {97}\)

The altar that Noah built is "paralleled" in the Babylonian epics, as has been shown. The words נְגָרָת יְהוָה אֶת רֶוֶת נְגָרָת "and the Lord smelled the sweet savor" (Gen. 8:21), have their grossly polytheistic analogy in both Atra-hasis and Gilgamesh. Leupold has said that God "viewed the sentiments behind the sacrifice with satisfaction."\(^ {98}\)

If there is a blessing on Atra-hasis at the end of his epic, it is missing. III:7 is about childbirth and seems as if it has no real connection with the rest of the poem. Utnapishtim obtains immortality and goes to live somewhere in the West. Noah receives a promise from God that He will not judge the earth by water again. The Covenant is
given to Noah; there is no Babylonian counterpart to the covenant.

CONCLUSION

After languishing in museum collections for nearly a century, the Epic of Atra-hasis has at last been presented to the scholarly world in a more readable form. The process is as yet incomplete. It is hoped that more fragments may be added to the missing sections of Tablet III. Such a discovery would enhance Flood studies even more. It must be admitted at this point that Gilgamesh XI is still the chief extra-biblical document on the Flood from the standpoint of completeness and parallels. Gilgamesh is a dynamic composition; its story is quite captivating. All of its twelve tablets constitute a marvel of ancient literature, surpassed only by Scripture itself. Atra-hasis, on the other hand, is somewhat colorless by comparison. Lambert has forewarned his readers on this account: "a modern reader must not expect to find our translation immediately appealing or fully intelligible." The greatest appeal in Atra-hasis must be, in the final analysis, for the philologist. The present author has only given a taste of the rich mine of comparative linguistic material in the epic. As to content, it may be reiterated with previous generations of academicians, all accounts--Atra-hasis, Gilgamesh XI (including the Sumerian flood story of Ziusudra, purposely not touched upon here) and the Genesis Flood--go back to an actual, historical occurrence of a world-wide flood catastrophe. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit has preserved the Biblical account without any mythology, polytheism or low moral concepts, and its very text has been supernaturally preserved as well.

DOCUMENTATION


10. Ibid., p. 4.


12. Ibid.


15. As early as 1902, i.e., at the time of Pinches' first edition of his work quoted immediately above, Pinches is willing to say, p. 117: "It is not improbable that the fragment published by the Rev. V. Scheil O. P., belongs to this legend. . . ." Pinches does not seem as convinced as Lambert implies he was.


17. Ibid., p. 5.

18. Ibid., pp. 32, 42.


20. The sign is * in Old Babylonian, and is found in phrases such as ina kaspi (KU. BABBAR)-su, "in his silver," cf. E. Bergmann, *Codex Hammurabi: Textus Primigenius* (editio tertia; Roma: Pontificio Institutum Biblicum, 1953), p. 8 (Law 35, line 3, of the Code).

24. Ibid., pp. 132-3.
28. The word E. KUR may be subdivided: E is "temple" and KUR is "mountain," in Sumerian/Akkadian. Thus the Ekur in Nippur was the "mountain temple," Enlil's ziggurat; cf. Buccellati, "Religions." April 28, 1970.
30. The word liqi is an imperative from lequ in 1:171.
32. The term libima is from banu, final weak, analogous to the Hebrew בָּנָה "to build."
33. Lullu is to be taken here as lullu-awilum, "mankind," Lambert, *Atra-hasis*, pp. 175, 187. -
37. Ibid., p. 153, n. 223
38. The word for "spirit" is etemmu, "ghost," Ibid., p. 177. There is, of course, no analogy to the Holy Spirit.
39. Simtu is a word normally translated "fate" or destiny," Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 201. These renderings are misleading, though, because the Akkadian word means much more than the connotation in English. "Destinies" can be conceived concretely, they can be written down, hence a "table of destinies." The power of the gods is not inherent in Babylonian thought, but is in a god's power to hold onto the destinies, cf. Buccellati, "Religions," April 21, 1970.
40. The text reads "600.600 mu.hi.a." Lambert, Atra-hasis, p. 66. "To acquire a god" was to experience unexpected good fortune. Jacobsen says: "In Sumerian religion the power whose presence was felt in such experiences was given form from the situation and was envisaged as a benevolent father or mother figure concerned with the individual in question and bent on furthering his fortunes,"Thorkild Jacobsen, "Formative Tendencies in Sumerian Religion" (in The Bible and the Ancient Near East, G. Ernest Wright, editor. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. 270.
42. Lambert, Atra-hasis, p. 71.
44. Lambert, Atra-hasis, p. 10.
45. The frequent breaks in the text have caused Lambert to number Tablet II differently.
46. The Babylonians believed everything floated (?) in a heavenly ocean, Buccellati, "Religions," April 9, 1970.
49. Again, the words "build a boat." bini eleppa show that in "to build" a boat and "to create" a man, banu/নন্ন is used synonymously. It is interesting to note that in Genesis 2:22. נב נב from נב, is used in the creation of Eve.
50. Actually Ṣamas, the sun god, is indicated.

51. Abubu is "flood" in Babylonian, from * 'bb, or ebebu, "to purify, clean," Borger, Lesestücke, p. LIII.


53. Ibid., pp. 125, 167n.


56. The word zubbu is "fly" in Atra-hasis. In the Ugaritic literature il/dbb is used, where it probably means "Lord of the Fly," Cyrus H. Gordon, Ugaritic Textbook (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1965), p. 388. The z-d is phonemically assured.

57. Lambert, Atra-hasis, p. 163.

58. Ibid., Gilgamesh XI:167-9 accuses Enlil alone.

59. Ibid., p. 164.

60. BDB, p. 274. Hebrew equivalents are: חֵ InvalidOperationException and דְסֻכַּת, "song, melody."


67. Cf. Borger, Lesestücke, III, Tafel 60, line 11. It must be due to scribal error that this reading is mansu-ri-pak when it should be mansu-su-ru-pak.

68. Ibid., line 14: there is ***, a-bu-bi, "flood."

69. Ibid., II, 94.

70. Ibid. MK designate "king" in Hebrew, but the idea inherent is "counselor" in Akkadian. Certainly the two are closely aligned.


73. Translation by Heidel, Gilgamesh, p. 81, 1. 29.

74. Borger, Lesestücke, III, Tafel 61.

75. Heidel, Gilgamesh, p. 82.

77. Heidel, Gilgamesh, p. 82
78. Speiser, "Gilgamesh." p. 94.
79. It is an easy matter to trace, Utu of the Sumerians through Shamash of the Akkadians to שמש, the word for "sun" in the Old Testament.
81. cf. Lambert, Atra-hasis, p. 93
82. There is a broken sign ( * ). This could be restored to *

83. The Sumerian Inanna.
84. Vide infra.
85. Instead of anything analogous to חשף רוחות, "four winds," in Hebrew, the text here has the numerical ***

86. Speiser, "Gilgamesh," p. 95.

89. BDB, p. 498. The equivalent is given in Atra-hasis, III:1:33,
91. Ibid., pp. 92-3.
92. Ibid., p. 178; the verb elelu, "be pure," has as its noun ellu, "pure."
94. Lambert, Atra-hasis, pp. 92-3. The words are [k]u-up-ru babi-il. The verb is from abalu, "to carry," The form babi does not look passive, but it is well-attested that from Old Akkadian on by-forms with an initial b are passive, Ignace J. Gelb, et al., The Assyrian Dictionary (Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1964), vol. I, pt. I, pp. 10, 28-9. "Pitch was brought" is the correct translation.
95. Lambert, Atra-hasis, p. 98; the words ana sari, "to the winds," are all that is left.
98. H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), I, 322. The Targum is careful to avoid such anthropomorphisms. Genesis 8:22 reads there: יָאָב אָלָה אֵלֶּה יָרַעְתֵּן, "and the Lord received/accepted with pleasure his sacrifice/gift," cf. Marcus Jastrow, comp., A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (New York: Pardes Publishing Company, 1950), II, 1309, 1486 and 1411, for the terms. הָלַם the Pael here, is "he received"; מָלַם is "pleasure," and לַמָּן, the term referred to in Mark 7: 11, "Corban" (A. S. V.).

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THE ROLE OF GENESIS 22:1-19
IN THE ABRAHAM CYCLE:
A COMPUTER-ASSISTED TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

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O. Introduction

The story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son Isaac as recorded in Gen 22:1-19 has caught the interest of countless students and scholars in a rainbow of disciplines. Philosophers, historians, and biblical expositors have all exhibited an abiding interest in the pericope.1 Recent advances in the areas of linguistics and technology now give occasion for a new generation of researchers to discover the passage as well. The following study is an interdisciplinary one, bringing together insights from the areas of discourse linguistics and information science in an examination of the text.

1. The Prominence of Gen 22:1-19 in the Abraham Cycle

Gen 22:1-19 is a crown jewel in the treasure box of OT narrative. Expositors have garnished it with accolades, calling it "one of the most beautiful narratives in the Old Testament,"2 "the most perfectly

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1 One can find such comments in the writings of such diverse personalities as I. Kant (Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone [New York: Harper & Row, 1960] 175), and A. Toynbee (An Historian's Approach to Religion [Oxford: University Press, 1979] 26, 39), not to mention all the individuals more directly connected with OT and NT studies.

formed and polished of the patriarchal stories, \(^3\) "consummate storytelling," \(^4\) and "the literary masterpiece of the Elohistic collection." \(^5\)

But what is it, the reader may ask, that sets this episode in Abraham’s story apart from all the others? What grammatical, lexical, literary, structural, and sociolinguistic devices (if any) has the author employed so artfully to gain this acclaim? The answers to these questions are explored in the present section.

1.1 Conclusions from a Computer-Assisted Study

Help is first sought from a piece of artificial intelligence software entitled DC, \(^6\) developed over the past four years by the present writer. This program is designed to read and evaluate sizeable blocks of linguistic data. It produces summary reports of relevant text-based statistics and attempts to identify thematic centers present within the data.

1.1.1 Background of the Computer-Assisted Study

Studies coming out of the recently developed discipline of discourse linguistics have demonstrated that communicators constantly manipulate three variables in the language code so as to express their intentions. These variables are unit size, arrangement of information within a given communication unit, and type of information within a unit. An author may designate a certain section of a text as thematic in at least three ways: 1) through the placement of language-specific "marked" features within that portion, 2) through the employment of statistically infrequent features within that portion, and 3) through increasing the structural and semantic complexity of a given portion. Based on the premise that authors drop objective, recoverable hints regarding their communicative intentions within a text, DC was developed in an effort to assist text analysts in the process of identifying and interpreting those hints. In its present form, DC is designed to


\(^5\) J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1917) 329. The praise is justified, even if the authorial assignment is not

\(^6\) An abbreviated acronym for the Discourse Critical Text Analysis Program. The program is currently being "beta tested," and should be ready for interested individuals within the next year. Individuals interested in obtaining the latest version of this and related programs may contact the author at the address listed at the front of the article.
perform high-speed analysis of Hebrew narrative framework materials. By monitoring changes in the language code of the nonquotational aspects of Hebrew narrative text and then comparing the data with normal Hebrew narrative patterns, the program is able to make intelligent judgments about a variety of textual features. Factors that are considered in making decisions include clause length, information order, subject type, subject frequency, verb type, verb frequency, length of quotation associated with a given clause, as well as relative location within the text.

In performing the present study, DC analyzed a prepared data file based on the BHS Hebrew text extending from Gen 11:27 to 25:11. The program was instructed to divide the Abraham cycle into twenty-one subsections, and then to analyze and compare each of the divisions among themselves. The divisions, along with an indication of their essential content, are listed in table 1.

1.1.2 Results of the Computer-Assisted Study

After the data had been read and evaluated by DC (a process taking about three minutes), the results were displayed. The conclusion of DC's analysis was that division 17, Gen 22:1-19, was the portion of the Abraham cycle encoded by the author as the thematic peak. Abraham was, incidentally, identified as the thematically central character. DC rated its degree of confidence associated with these decisions as high.

Three primary evidences pointing to Gen 22:1-19 as peak were identified by the program. First and most significant, in this section of the cycle, the thematically central character occurred as the subject of a narrative framework verb more times than any other. Thirty times throughout these 19 verses Abraham functioned in this manner, twelve more than in any other section. The assumption behind this test is that the author of a text will normally employ the key character most significantly at the most crucial portion of the story.

Furthermore, the combined number of occasions in which either Abraham or God served as narrative framework verb subjects (40) also exceeded that of any other portion of the text. The closest competitor was division 10 (Gen 18:16-33), which had a total of 25 such occurrences. The operative assumption behind this criterion is that the author of OT narrative will normally have God, the divine protagonist, on stage during the portion of the story reckoned by the author as most important. God's ten employments in the subject role (in some instances identified as the theophanic נַחֲזָקָּבָּה) mark him as particularly significant in the section, especially when it is noted that
Table 1: Divisions in the Abraham Cycle

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<th>Location</th>
<th>Essential Content</th>
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<td>12:1-9</td>
<td>Call &amp; Move to Canaan</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>12:10-20</td>
<td>Abram in Egypt</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>18:16-33</td>
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<td>21:22-34</td>
<td>Treaty at Beersheba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>22:1-19</td>
<td>Abraham Tested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>22:20-24</td>
<td>Nahor's Sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>23:1-20</td>
<td>Abraham Buries Sarah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>24:1-66</td>
<td>Isaac Gets a Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>25:1-11</td>
<td>Abraham Dies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Narrative Framework Subject Occurrences of Abraham
(Listed by Division)
in six of the 21 divisions he never has a subject role, and in four others he is so used no more than two times. 7

A final reason germane to DC's decision to select Gen 22:1-19 as the thematic center was the location of this pericope within the overall expanse of text. A tendency of narrators in all cultures is to place the section of story being encoded as most significant in the latter 50 percent of the overall text. Clearly division 17 fits this criterion. Incidentally, it should be pointed out that DC identified Gen 22:1-19 as possessing the highest connectivity among the sections of text occurring in the final half of the Abraham cycle. The high connectivity value is significant because it indicates that this pericope repeats verbs and subjects used elsewhere in the text to a higher degree than any other episodes in the likely peak region. The reuse here of verbs and subjects used elsewhere in the Abraham cycle suggests that division 17 contains a number of motifs used elsewhere in the Abraham cycle.

1.2 Observations from Discourse Linguistics

Beyond the observations that can presently be made on the basis of the computer program, numerous other features within the grammatical and semantic code of the text suggest that the author intended the story of Abraham's divine test to be the centerpiece of his story.

1.2.1 Semantic Prominence Markers

Employment of a Prominent Geographical Setting--a Mountain

One of the more subtle means by which an author sets apart an episode intended to be taken as central is through the staging of the event. Quite often the event will occur in marked settings. The setting may be highlighted through unusual weather conditions (e.g., storms-Noah [Genesis 7-8], Ezra [Ezra 10], Job [Job 38], Jonah [Jonah 1]) or through usage of unusual places, especially mountains (e.g., Moses at Sinai; Elijah at Carmel; Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration, and Calvary).

According to the story, God directed Abraham to go to a mountain. The key events in Abraham's test actually occurred on that mountain. The fact that this is the only story in the Abraham cycle with such a “marked” setting possessing a positive connotation increases the conviction that Gen 22:1-19 is literally to be understood as

7 The six divisions in which God is not employed as subject of a narrative framework verb are: 1, 5, 12, 16, 18, and 19. The four divisions in which God is employed only one to two times are: 3, 4, 20, and 21.
the high point of the overall series. The fact that the mountain chosen for this event later became Jerusalem's temple mount (cf. 2 Chron 3:1) would have given added religious prominence, and therefore significance, to the site for later Israelite audiences.\(^8\)

*Employment of a Sociolinguistically Significant Temporal Setting— the Third Day*

Not only may an author manipulate the geographical and meteorological setting, he/she may also bring prominence to an episode by its temporal setting. This may involve placing it at an unusual time of day (e.g., night [Ruth 3]) or on a sociologically significant day (e.g., Jesus' Last Supper and crucifixion during the feast of Passover festivities).

As noted by numerous commentators, “three days is the period of preparation for more important events in the Old Testament.”\(^9\) Its presence, used elsewhere throughout the Book of Genesis in connection with significant events,\(^10\) is found in the Abraham cycle only here. Though this feature is a subtle one and would have probably communicated only on the subliminal level to the original audience, its presence in Gen 22:1-19 is telltale.

\(^8\) The identification of Mount Moriah with the site of the Solomonic temple invites extended speculation concerning the date of composition and historical precision of the Pentateuch. A common technique in narrative composition is to use a location considered especially important by the intended audience as the setting of the most important event in a story. With the temple mount in Jerusalem surely being the most important site in monarchic and Judahistic Yahwism, a writer creating the composition from the general time period of 950-450 B.C. could conceivably have borrowed the prestige of the Jerusalem temple complex and retrojected it back into the Abraham narrative. If this were so, the narrator could then have either modified a tale originally associated with another site in Palestine, or simply created a new one. Though I have never read this line of reasoning in Genesis commentaries, I suspect it would find favor from many. Consistent with this suspicion is the fact that the majority of 20th-century commentators understand the story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son to be primarily the product of the “Elohist,” with minor additions (vv 15-18) coming from a "Jehovistic Redactor" (cf., e.g., Skinner, 327, 331, and Westermann, 363).

My personal opinion in this matter differs from the preceding line of reasoning. I believe that the events of Gen 22:1-19 happened exactly as stated and were written down prior to the period of Israelite monarchy. The fact that Moriah was later identified with the site of the Solomonic temple and, at a still later time, with the general area of Calvary is a testimony to God's oversight of history, not the creative genius of an OT narrator.


Heightened Vividness through Extended Repartee

When a narrator wishes to bring additional prominence to a particular episode, he or she will often do so by increasing the amount of dialogue at that point in the story. Quotations, the content of which was too trivial to include elsewhere in the narrative, may be present in force in the highlighted section, achieving at times the effect of drama rather than simple narrative.

Lively, if brief, dialogic exchanges are in evidence in three sections of the Abraham test: 22:1-2 (three quotations: two by God; one by Abraham), 22:7-8 (four quotations: two by Isaac; two by Abraham), and 22:11-12 (three quotations: two by גֵּדֹל וּרְאֹבָם; one by Abraham). These three occurrences of the phenomenon suggest that the author intended the audience to participate in this episode more intimately than in any of the others in Abraham's life.

Employment of a Sociologically Significant Speech Act—an Oath

From a sociolinguistic standpoint, perhaps the most solemn and significant genre of speech in Israelite communication was the oath. The taking of an oath was always serious business, but never more serious than when God himself was the one doing so. The usage of this ultimately significant speech act within Gen 22:1-19 serves as one additional indication that the author was intending this section to be taken as the climax of the Abraham cycle. Confirmation of this opinion—should any be necessary—is found in the fact that reference is evidently made to Yahweh's oath of 22:15-18 five times in later Scriptures; three times in the Pentateuch (Exod 13:11; 32:13; 33:1); and twice in the NT (Luke 1:73; Heb 6:13). Throughout the entirety of the Pentateuch, God never again swears by himself that he will do something.11

Employment of Dilemma and Paradox

A common manner of focusing the audience's attention on a given section of text is through presenting confrontations between contradictory values, ideals, or concepts. The delicious tensions created by such conflicts heighten interest levels and thus aid an author in controlling audience focus. Abraham finds himself in dilemmas more than once within the Genesis stories—e.g., when he is forced to choose between preservation of his life and loss of his wife, and when

11 Outside of the Pentateuch he is recorded as having done so in the following locations: Isa 45:23; 62:8 (swearing by his right hand and mighty arm); Jer 22:5; 44:26 (swearing by his name); 49:13; 51:14.
he is promised a land for his descendants though he has fathered nary a son. However, no conflict is more dynamic, no dilemma more wrenching than that experienced in 22:1-19. The choices were simple for Abraham, yet excruciating. He could refuse God and preserve his son's life, thereby jeopardizing the divine legacy. Or he could obey God and preserve his right to a divine inheritance, yet lose his beloved heir. This superlative example of dilemma indicates that the author intended the story of Abraham's testing to be the climax of the Abraham cycle.

Paradox is evident in the fact that the very God who promised that Isaac would be the heir of promise (Gen 17:16, 19, 21) was now the one who required the death of childless Isaac at the hands of Abraham (22:2). The curve of human logic trails off into an asymptote as the gracious giver of the promise becomes the supreme threat to the promise.

Employment of Paronomasia

Memorable-and thus highlighted-sections of text are also created through the utilization of paronomasia. The artful employment here of the verb הָרָא in both the Qal (vv 4, 8, 13, 14) and Niphal stems (v 14) serves as one of the most significant examples of this in all of OT literature. The pun is sharpened especially because of the semantic ambivalence of the final employment of the word translated "appear provide." Translators and exegetes alike have found grist for footnote mills here.

Inclusion of God's Final Activities Relative to the Abraham Cycle

God or the Angel of Yahweh occurs as the subject of a narrative framework construction ten times during the "testing of Abraham" pericope. However, in the remainder of the Abraham cycle, he never again functions as the subject of an event-line verb. This relatively dense concentration followed by a dearth of appearances suggests that this episode contains God's final and, predictably, most memorable actions.

The final event-line verb of which a divine being is the subject is the theophanic utterance of 22:15-18. A tendency in narrative is to make a major character's final sizeable speech his or her most important one. The quotation in vv 15-18 stands as the last in a series of 35 speeches delivered by God or the Angel of Yahweh throughout the Abraham cycle and ranks sixth in length. As last in the series, it possesses a natural prominence that tends to make it particularly memorable. The fact that it is contained in the 22:1-19 pericope serves additionally to confirm the intended centrality of this section.
1.2.2 Lexical Prominence Markers

Employment of a Hapax Legomenon

A favored means by which communicators draw attention to particular language units is through the employment of unusual vocabulary. The narrator's usage of a hapax legomenon in v 9, דְּקָף, has certainly accomplished that. In fact, the common Jewish name for the entire temptation pericope is 'aqedah.

Employment of a Unique Narrative Clause Structure

Information may also be made to stand out by expressing it in a clause whose structure differs significantly from the norm. Gen 22:13 contains a construction that contains no parallels anywhere in the narrative framework of the Pentateuch. A woodenly literal gloss of the clause reads "And-behold ram behind being-caught in-the-bush by-his-horns." Though exclamatory clauses are relatively rare in their own right, no other הָנָה clause in the corpus of Pentateuchal data contains an adverb in the preverb field. This information order was apparently problematic enough to translators to warrant a textual emendation, replacing יהוה with יהוה; the LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Aramaic targums all accept this modification. The majority of popular modern English versions follow this emendation as well.12

Yet on the basis of modern linguistics and textual criticism's principle of lectio difficilior, the awkward reading of the MT seems preferable. Discourse linguists recognize that natural human language patterns predictably contain grammatical abnormalities in zones of high thematic interest. In 22:13 it can be argued that the conveyance of a once-in-a-universe event, i.e., a ram being caught in a thicket behind a man who is just about to sacrifice his favorite son, required a once-in-a-grammatical-universe kind of clause.

Employment of Lexical Variety in Divine References

Within Hebrew narrative, characters are made more prominent through increasing the number of means used in referring to them. Within this section of the Abraham cycle, three different words or phrases are used to refer to God: יְהֹוָה, אֱלֹהֵי אֱמוֹת, and נְאֻם. The

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12 Included among the popular versions which base their translation on an emended Hebrew text are the New English Bible, the New American Bible, the Jerusalem Bible, the Good News Bible, the Living Bible, and the New International Version. Popular English versions accepting the MT's reading include the King James Version, the Revised Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, and the New King James Version.
diverse referencing of God in 22:1-19 suggests that the author was deliberately increasing the thematic centrality of God, the ultimately significant divine character, at this point in the story.

2. The Role of Gen 22:1-19 in the Abraham Cycle

In spite of the generous praises accorded Gen 22:1-19, no consensus exists as to its function within the Abraham cycle. The majority of 19th and 20th century scholars have preferred instead to interpret the story as though its essential message was derivable apart from any consideration of its immediate literary context. Thus it has been variously perceived as an explanation for the absence of human sacrifice in Israelite religion, an etiological legend, and an edificatory tale depicting model obedience. By most accounts, its "true" purpose cannot be known anyway, since the story was supposedly repeatedly transformed by the OT community of faith to meet her changing spiritual needs.

The recent expansion of the biblical scholar's role to include that of literary critic promises to bring with it a reevaluation of prevailing conclusions, or at least a redirecting of efforts. With the advent of canonical criticism, reader-response criticism, and the like, the biblical scholar is free to examine a text as it now stands. The following conclusions are based on an evaluation of the story as it is found in the MT.

The thesis of this paper is that Gen 22:1-19 functions as the thematic crux of the Abraham story, bringing together in climactic fashion seven different motifs developed throughout the whole. Each of these motifs is discussed below.

2.1 The Climax of the "Abraham Tested" Motif

The unambiguous intention of the biblical narrator is that the 19 verse pericope of Genesis 22 be understood as a divine testing of Abraham. If it is valid to say that the events of this chapter are the only ones in Abraham's life explicitly called a "test" (Heb. נְדָע), it is equally valid to note that this is not the only test within Abraham's life. In fact, at several points in his life Abraham faces significant tests. The testing motif begins with God's call for Abraham to leave country, nation, and family (12:1). It continues with the test of famine in

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13 Impetus and justification for this surgical removal of text from context comes, arguably, from biblical scholarship's preoccupation with source identification.
14 Cf. Westermann, 354; Skinner, 3.32.
the promised land (12:10). His years in Palestine are dogged by the continuing test of faith in God's promise of an heir (15:4-6). But the concluding and obviously climactic test of Abraham's life was God's call to take a final journey, one parallel in some ways to his journey of chap. 12. As in his first expedition, Abraham did not know his destination when he set out; as in the original journey so many years before, Abraham was called to separate himself from his people in this case his only son. As the last test in the series, the journey of 22:1-19 holds the position of natural prominence.

2.2 The Climax of the Abrahamic “Heir Denied” Motif

That concern for a proper heir for Abraham would be a central issue in the story of Abraham is implied in the genealogical note of 11:30. Even before the readers learn of Abraham's promises they are informed of his problem: Sarai is barren. The thread of Abraham's concern for a proper heir is woven more consistently into the fabric of his story than is any other. Would nephew Lot substitute in some way for his own lack of offspring (cf. 13:14-16)? What about Eliezer of Damascus (15:2-5, 13, 16, 18)? If not him, then perhaps Ishmael (16:2-10; 17:8, 18). Do not make me laugh, God! You mean Sarah is going to bear the child that will be Abraham's proper heir (17:15-21; 18:10-14)?

One questions whether Abraham himself believed God's promise. No sooner had the Lord given the astounding assurance of effete Sarah's impending motherhood than Abraham imperiled it all by giving Sarah in marriage to another man (20:2-13). Nevertheless, God rescued Sarah and delivered on his promise (21:1-7). Now in chap. 22 the child whose birth was hinted at twelve chapters previously (11:30), the one for whom Abraham had waited a lifetime and whom he loved above all others, was to be given up to God as a childless burnt offering (22:2). This most prominent theme--that of Abraham's search for a proper heir--ties the diverse stories of the Abraham cycle together more securely than any other.

2.3 The Climax of the “Abraham the Altar Builder” Motif

Abraham's pious devotion to the Lord is evidenced by the altars he built and the sacrifices he offered. On three occasions throughout his story the narrator depicts Abraham as constructing an altar dedicated to Yahweh (12:8; 13:18; 22:9). Only in the third instance does the narrator note the actual offering of a sacrifice. In the previous instances Abraham merely “called on the name of the Lord" (12:8; 13:4, 18).
The extra detail provided in the altar sequence of 22:1-19 clearly sets this event above the others.

2.4 The Climax of the Abrahamic “Separation from Family” Motif

Abraham's life is the story of a series of familial schisms. In addition to the events of Genesis 22, Abraham is pulled away from his Mesopotamian ancestral roots (12:1); he parts company with his beloved wife Sarah on two occasions (12:15; 20:3), and twice more with Hagar (16:6; 21:14); he breaks ties with nephew Lot (13:11); and also separates from his firstborn son Ishmael (21:14).

Each of these previous experiences, however, pales in comparison with Abraham's divinely appointed separation from his favorite son Isaac. Here Abraham is called to break the deepest of genetic and psychological bonds, that of father and son, father and future. The barrier being erected between them is not, as in the other cases, one of altered marital status or geography--it is the wall of death.

2.5 The Climax of the Abrahamic Faith Motif

The majority judgment of 20th-century biblical scholarship is that the speech of 22:15-18 is a late and loosely connected addition to the story of Abraham's test. However, a literary and thematic analysis suggests that far from being an awkward appendage to the story, it is in fact the keystone. In this four-verse section, three themes of fundamental significance not only to the story of Abraham, but also to the Pentateuch are brought to a climax. The first of these is the theme of Abraham's sacrificial, obedient faith.

Abraham's obedient faith was demonstrated at crucial moments throughout his life: in his movement from Haran at age 75 (12:4); in his trust in God's promise of countless offspring (15:6); in his joyous acceptance of God's assurance of a son from Sarah's womb (17:15-22; 18:10); and in his remarkable willingness to offer Isaac on the altar (22:3-14). But only in the last-mentioned event is the Lord actually quoted as commending Abraham for his faithful obedience. With this added touch at the climactic moment in Abraham's life, the narrator sets the final act of obedience on a pedestal above the others, giving it

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15 My appreciation is expressed to Prof. J. H. Walton for the suggestion to include this section.

a prominence that was apparent even to the NT writers centuries later (Heb 11:17-19; Jas 4:21).

2.6 The Climax of the Abrahamic Blessing Motif

In his speeches to Abraham, God used a form of the word "bless" seven times. The first five were utilized in God's first recorded statement to Abraham; the sixth and seventh occurrences were found in God's last words to Abraham. The concluding theophany affirmed the essential twofold thrust of the blessing statements of 12:2-4: Abraham would be blessed by God, and all nations on earth would derive a blessing from him. The promise, so bright in the beginning, had been preserved untarnished through Abraham's incredible obedience.

2.7 The Climax of the Abrahamic "Possess the Land" Motif

A pivotal theme in the story of Abraham, and certainly in the Pentateuch as well, is that God would give the promised land to Abraham's descendants. The concept first appeared in 12:7 and was repeated by God on four additional occasions within the Abraham cycle (13:14-17; 15:7-21; 17:8; 22:17). The most militant and triumphant of these passages is the final one. Though brief, the reference is clear and pointed: reception of God's gift of the land would require the use of force on Israel's part. Israel would have to fight the battles, but God had already settled the outcome of the war.

3. Implications of the Study

Results of the previous study suggest two truths: first, that narrators have at their disposal a number of means by which they may guide the attention of their audiences. Skillful employment of these means permits writers to maintain a significant degree of control over the messages which their audiences receive from the texts. Incumbent upon a writer is the responsibility to drop hints in the text sufficient to permit a literate audience to retrieve the intended messages being deposited by the author. A primary responsibility of the audience is to identify and correctly interpret the lexical, grammatical, and semantic clues left by the creator of the text.

Second it is clear that the use of artificial intelligence resources presently available today can yield contributions to the science and art of interpreting the Bible. While the role that artificial intelligence

17 Gen 12:2, two times; 12:3, three times; 22:11, one time; 22:18, one time.
plays is at present small and supportive, the potential within the foreseeable future looms large indeed. As the fields of language, philosophy, and psychology continue to clarify the marvelous mechanics of human communication, computer programs utilizing these insights can be written that efficiently read and interpret language. And we need not fear these probable inevitabilities. Rather, let us eagerly await these hearing aids, await them as a race of hearing-impaired sinners desperately needing to hear the voice of God in his Word.

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THE FOUR MOST IMPORTANT BIBLICAL PASSAGES FOR A CHRISTIAN ENVIRONMENTALISM

MICHAEL A. BULLMORE*

RIBBLESDALE

EARTH, sweet Earth, sweet landscape, with leaves throng
And louched low grass, heaven that dost appeal
To, with no tongue to plead, no heart to feel;
That canst but only be, but dost that long--

Thou canst but be, but that thou well dost; strong
Thy plea with him who dealt, nay does now deal,
Thy lovely dale down thus and thus bids reel
Thy river, and o'er gives all to rack or wrong.

And what is Earth's eye, tongue, or heart else, where
Else, but in dear and dogged man?--Ah, the heir
To his own selfbent so bound, so tied to his turn,
To thriftless reave both our rich round world bare
And none reck of world after, this bids wear
Earth brows of such care, care and dear concern.

--Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

I. INTRODUCTION

In the upper reaches of Michigan's lower peninsula near the small town of Mancelona stands the Au Sable Institute, an evangelically based education center for promoting a Christian environmental stewardship. The philosophy of the Au Sable Institute reads in part as follows:

The Board, faculty, and staff of the Au Sable Institute confess that God is owner of all. Humankind is not the owner of that over which it has authority. Human authority is more that of trustee than owner. The scope of this trust is global. Since all creatures depend on the earth for life, health and fulfillment, stewardship is

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the responsible use and care of creation. This is a clear and repeated testimony of Scripture.¹

It is the purpose of this article to focus exclusively on this clear and repeated biblical testimony. While previous articles in this series have attended to scientific, political, and historical dimensions of the environmentalism issue there has been as yet no closely focused examination of biblical material on the issue in this venue.²

It is not as though no biblical attention has been paid elsewhere. There is an encouraging recent growth in both the amount and the quality of writing addressing environmentalism from a more purely scriptural perspective.³ Much of this material, however, has arrived in the form of book-length treatments or collections of essays each dedicated to various parts of the biblical witness. It is our belief that it will prove useful to Christian teachers, and especially pastors, to have a more compact and more easily accessed treatment of the most essential biblical materials. Hence our focus on the "most significant" passages.

In their article "Evangelicals and Environmentalism: Past, Present, and Future," Grizzle, Rothrock, and Barrett share the results

¹As quoted in W. Granberg-Michaelson, ed., Tending the Garden: Essays on the Gospel and the Earth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) vii. The present author has no formal connection with the Au Sable Institute.

²Some may argue that the sequence here is backwards. In his excellent earlier article "Bridging the Gap: Christian Environmental Stewardship and Public Environmental Policy" (Trinity Journal 18NS [1997]), F. Van Dyke speaks of writings which focus primarily on the biblical and theological dimensions of environmental stewardship as a "constructive first step" (p. 142). A few pages later he adds, "As Christian witness in environmental stewardship has matured beyond merely articulating what the Bible and Christian tradition say about the care of God's creation, so this maturity has taken tangible form on many fronts. These have included the production of writings by Christians with deliberate implications for environmental policy" (p. 150). Late in his article and as something of a thesis, Van Dyke states, "Ultimately, the reason and logic of the Christian position must be based not on biblical data only, but on sound and original study, supported by the Christian community, of the basic properties and behaviors of ecosystems, and by a clear and first-hand understanding of the technical application of management practices toward the solution of environmental problems" (p. 168). Clearly Van Dyke's concern is with public policy, and so I understand his reference to a "Christian position" to be a "position" assumed in the process of formulating public policy and encouraging specific public action. Given this understanding, I agree with his thesis and applaud its intent. But leadership in such public thought and action is the responsibility of relatively few people. For Christians more broadly considered whose responsibility it is to think and behave in a Christian manner, the "reason and logic" of their Christian position (i.e., world view) must be unapologetically grounded in biblical data only and simply find corroboration in professional scientific study. Thus our present effort.

of a national survey of pastors in which the participants were asked, "What are the most important obstacles to further development of an effective philosophy of creation that involves appropriate environmental concern and action by evangelicals?" The most cited "obstacle" (identified by well over half the participants) was "the lack of teaching and preaching on the environment, particularly the failure to develop a robust theology of the creation." This lament is voiced repeatedly by those committed to getting a responsible Christian presence felt in our society as it addresses issues of environmental concern.

It is therefore the intention of this article to be something of a primer for pastors and teachers who have a desire to include as a part of their larger ministry of public instruction and encouragement, truth concerning mankind's responsibility before God toward his creation (a desire we would want to encourage in all pastors and teachers) but who to date have not had the opportunity adequately to study and process the potentially overwhelming amount of material dedicated to the subject. In short, this article gathers and begins to operationalize the foundational biblical thought necessary for a faithful Christian proclamation regarding the environment.

At this point it may be necessary to address a fundamental question. Why is it important to preach and teach this? Shouldn't we concentrate our limited time on the more pressing concerns of the gospel and Christian life? While the "environmental issue" is one of particularly poignant current concern about which Christians should be able to think and speak from within a Christian perspective, if for no other reason to engage in potentially productive discussion, if it is considered separately, as some interesting topic, it does pale in comparison to the importance of other Christian categories. It is only when it is seen as of a piece with our larger responsibility before God that it assumes the place of something worthy of our time and careful consideration. A piece of history from the environmentalism debate will be instructive for us here.

Soon after the emergence of "environmentalism" as a movement, accusations were leveled against Christianity, blaming it for the current ecological crisis. As a Christian voice began to be raised on the issue of environmentalism, much time was spent refuting these accusations. It now appears that those accusations, at least in some scholarly quarters, are being retracted. However, at least some Christian writers were willing to own some blame. In response to the attempt by some Christian writers to place the blame at the feet of

5See, for another example, Van Dyke, et al., Redeeming Creation, 148, 175-6.
6Most notably, though by no means exclusively, by L. White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," Science 155 (March 10, 1967) 1203-7. There is an almost obligatory reference to this article in virtually every Christian treatment of the issue.
irresponsible Christians in order to protect Christianity as a set of ideas, James Nash insisted,

It will not do to draw a neat distinction between Christianity and Christendom, between the faith itself and perversions of it by its practitioners. That distinction may be formally or logically true, as I agree, but it is facile and unconvincing when applied to history. We cannot so easily distinguish between the faith and the faithful.7

Despite Nash's warning, my attempt in what follows is to focus on "the faith" as set forth in the Scriptures, independent of its practice by Christians. By so doing I am seeking to contribute to a more faithful expression of true Christianity by those who call themselves Christian. The fact that many Christians have become captive to a world view that unduly elevates economic progress makes it absolutely necessary for Christian pastors and teachers to address the matter head-on-and for better or worse the issue of environmental stewardship is integrally involved in this clash of world views. Thus, preaching and teaching a Christian environmentalism can, in our day, play a significant role in facilitating the movement of people away from lives of self-interest and toward an earnest devotion to a Christian way of life, and must occupy a place in the total teaching of Christians to pursue and honor the accomplishment of the purposes of God in his earth. The mandate to care for the earth, a mandate fundamental to man's being and seminal in his relationship to God, has not been abrogated. Environmental stewardship is therefore a matter of both Christian obedience and Christian piety. And, it is our confidence that a clear and straightforward teaching is presented in Scripture upon which morally responsible teaching and action can be based.8

Before we look at the biblical passages chosen it may be helpful to speak a word regarding the selection process. There is an almost inexhaustible number of passages which might be treated in connection with a discussion of a Christian environmentalism. The Psalms alone are filled with references to God as Creator and in relationship to his creation. The Prophets contain repeated references to the network of issues related to justice and human greed, a major one being that of land use. Many biblical writers, in both Old Testament and New, speak with an eye toward a future in which the transformation of creation figures largely. However, within this abundance, a fairly well-defined canon of Scriptures emerges which

8That H. P. Santmire does not share this optimism is suggested by the title of his book The Travail of Nature: The Ambiguous Ecological Promise of Christian Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985). See especially pp. 8-9. I am proceeding under the conviction that the Bible does provide clear instruction regarding our responsibility toward creation from which principles instructive for thought and life can be legitimately inferred.
One might expect an attempt to articulate a biblical Christian environmentalism to begin with Genesis 1 and its majesterial statements of the foundational truth that God is the Creator. While that truth deserves pride of place, we will use Psalm 104 to highlight it. For in this psalm we find not only the assertion of the truth that God created the world but also the expression of corollary truths such that the psalm presents a more fully developed picture of the relationship that exists between God and creation. Thus it brings the reader to a more heightened awareness of the response appropriate to the foundational truth it declares. It might even be argued that if one had to choose but one passage to support a Christian environmentalism it should be this psalm; and if one had to choose but one verse it would be Ps 104:24. "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures."

The contribution of Psalm 104 might be summarized as follows:

1. God created the earth and all things in it, and he continues to sustain the earth and all things in it by the loving exercise of his sovereign power.
2. The earth and all things in it belong to God by virtue of his creative work, and all things find their reason for being fundamentally in relation to him.
3. The earth and all things in it were created perfectly—each creature in itself and the entire creation in its interrelatedness.
4. Even after the entrance of sin into the created order this perfection still shines through so as to be perceivable by man. Thus, creation continually bears witness to the perfections of God and promotes in man praise toward God.

While the foundational truth of God's creative work operates as an underlying assumption throughout most of Psalm 104, there are a few places where the psalmist explicitly asserts it (e.g., vv. 5-6), and

9There is a fairly obvious structural parallel between Psalm 104 and the creation account in Genesis 1. This parallelism supports our decision, for it argues that Psalm 104 is a self-conscious attempt to interpret and flesh out the Genesis account. For an analysis of this parallel, see, for example, D. Kidner, Psalms (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975) 368.
at a moment of culmination in the psalm he breaks out with the passionate declaration to God, "Thou hast made..." (v. 24). Clearly, the heavens and earth exist as a result of the exercise of God's sovereign creativity. The unique emphasis of this psalm, however, is on God's sustenance of his creation. "He makes springs pour water. . . . He waters the mountains. . . . He makes grass grow. . . . The trees of the Lord are well watered" (vv. 10, 13, 14, 16). And after providing a representative cataloging of some animal denizens of forest, mountain, badlands, and sea, the psalmist summarizes, "These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time" (v. 27). All creatures are completely dependent on God. When God provides, his creatures are satisfied (v. 28). When he "hides his face," they are terrified (v. 29). When God sends his "Spirit," there is new life (v. 30). When he takes breath away, life ceases (v. 29). Here is a significant extension of the Genesis account. Yes, creation exists only because it was called into existence by God. But it continues to exist only because of the continuous care of its Creator.

Second, growing out of this primary claim of the text is the implication of theocentricity in creation. By virtue of having been created by God, all creatures belong to him. They are, says our psalmist, "your possessions" (v. 24); "his works" (v. 31). "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters" (Ps 24:1-2; emphasis added). But not only have all creatures been created by God, they have been created for God as well, and thus they find their primary reason for being with reference to him. This is a point of no small significance in the current discussion regarding environmentalism.

That God finds pleasure in his creation is a consistent testimony of Scripture. It is this that motivates the psalmist's desire, "May the Lord rejoice in his works" (v. 31). But can it be said that this pleasure of God in his non-human creatures is a sufficient explanation for their being? It is one thing to find pleasure in something that exists. It is another thing to say a thing exists for that reason.

There is no question that creation exists, at least in part, for the purpose of nourishing mankind. "He makes. . . plants for man to cultivate-bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart" (vv. 14-15). But does this reference to man exhaust the non-human creatures' reason for being? Or, to ask it positively, does non-human creation find any reason for being, independent of man? Psalm 104 suggests it does. Before we examine that suggestion, however, it will prove useful to consider the opposing position.

Representative of this position is Thomas Sieger Derr, who willingly describes himself as an "unreconstructed" anthropocentrist. Derr is positioning himself vis-a-vis the
biocentrism which dominates much of secular environmentalism and which holds "nature" or "the life process" as the primary value. Against this, Derr is reasserting the conviction that man is decidedly above nature and that nature exists to sustain human life.\textsuperscript{11} As a "Christian" humanist Derr is quick to add that man is made for God but he is adamant ("unrepentant" he says) in his anthropocentrism. Man's needs are a sufficient explanation for the existence of non-human creation.\textsuperscript{12}

While Derr, and others like him, are right in distancing themselves from the biocentrism of secular environmentalism for explicitly religious reasons, their mistake is in not distancing themselves far enough. Derr would no doubt affirm a theocentric world view, but within that world view, I would argue, there needs to be a theocentric view of non-human creation.\textsuperscript{13} Nature certainly was made with man in mind but man's needs are an insufficient frame of reference entirely to explain creation.\textsuperscript{14} Only God can supply such a frame of reference.

Our psalm, along with other passages (Job 38-41 in particular), speak to the fact that creation does not exist solely for the sake of man. In his speech to Job, God clearly implies that some creatures exist simply for his own delight.

\begin{quote}
Look at the behemoth, 
which I made along with you 
and which feeds on grass like an ox. 
What strength he has in his loins, 
what power in the muscles of his belly!
His tail sways like a cedar; 
The sinews of his thighs are close-knit. 
His bones are tubes of bronze, 
His limbs like rods of iron. 
He ranks first among the works of God. 
\end{quote}

(Job 40:15-19)

While God may not be chuckling gleefully as he provides this description, it is evident that he is taking great delight in a prize

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., 23-8.
\textsuperscript{13}Derr does acknowledge the possibility of some value in creation beyond human nourishment, but he is unwilling to speculate as to exactly what that value is, "not being privy to the mind of God" (\textit{Environmental Ethics}, 140, cf., p. 23). I will argue that, because of the presence of certain passages in our Bibles, it is not necessary to speculate.
\textsuperscript{14}One might be more attracted to this position if by "man's needs" was meant more than just food and shelter. Certainly man has a need to have his soul uplifted, and we know that God created the heavens and the earth in part to achieve that very purpose (see Psalms 8 and 19). However, even with this expanded definition of human need, it remains an inadequate frame of reference satisfactorily to explain the reason for creation's existence.
creation and is happy to point out "how utterly and awesomely useless (to us) are some of the creatures he has made."\textsuperscript{15} After extending his point by means of a similar description of "leviathan" (41:1-10), God emphatically declares, "Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me" (41:11; emphasis added). Against Job's presumption God is graciously offering the reminder that he does not owe man anything. While somewhat less dramatically, our psalm makes a similar point.

The trees of the Lord are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees. The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coneys. You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl. The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens. There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number-living things both large and small. There the ships go to and fro, and the leviathan, which you formed to frolic there. (vv.16-18, 20-22, 25-26)

Here we are shown that it is not just man's needs, certainly not his physical ones, that explain God's manifold creation.\textsuperscript{16} Apparently God has a vital interest in scurrying pikas, nesting storks, tiny marine creatures, and the prowling nocturnal animals of the deep forest and jungle. He has given them each appropriate shelter and he

\textsuperscript{15}Yan Dyke, et al., \textit{Redeeming Creation}, 49.

\textsuperscript{16}Of particularly charming interest is this reference to a frolicking "leviathan" (probably in this case a cetacean). One might argue, especially upon observing the great benefits that several human cultures have derived through whaling, that the primary reason for the existence of whales is the provision of food for man. Certainly God has provided for man in this way. But what is this reference to frolicking? The word translated "frolic" speaks of laughter and merry-making-sporting whales of all things. Of what value is that to man, especially considering all the frolicking that goes on out at sea unobserved by human eyes? (That man in his ships has the occasional opportunity to observe such sporting is only another blessing of God.) It should also be remembered in this connection that having already brought the entire animal kingdom into being God then told Adam and Eve that every plant and fruit-bearing tree was theirs for food (Gen 1:29). That God made the same provision for the animals only highlights the fact that animals were not on the menu. Of what practical use to man were the wild animals during the period up to God's declaration to Noah that "now" meat was for eating too (Gen 9:3)?
satisfies their bellies with "good things" (v. 28). And all this interest is for the creatures' own sakes without reference to man's physical sustenance. In fact, the psalmist makes a point of drawing a sharp line between the economy of these beasts and the economy of man. "The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. The sun rises, and they steal away: they return and lie down in their dens. Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening" (vv. 21-23; emphasis added). A life unrelated to the needs of man is forever going on. Therefore, any ardent anthropocentrism must be radically, perhaps categorically, qualified. Though man is undeniably the focus of God's creative and redemptive work there is an almost overwhelming fecundity to life that simply cannot be explained by reference to human nourishment and comfort. Again, only God can supply an adequate frame of reference. It is precisely this theocentrism that will rescue us from the greed or indifference that so easily invade an anthropocentric view. Keeping God at the center of the universe will help us to behave.

The third major contribution of Psalm 104 has to do with the perfection of God's creation. It is in v. 24 that this emerges most powerfully. "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all" (emphasis added). This reference to divine wisdom operating in the making of "all" of God's creatures speaks of the perfection inherent in each different species. Every animal and plant species that exists owns perfection as a result of the exercise of God's wisdom in creation. John Calvin wrote,

God has been pleased to manifest his perfections in the whole structure of the universe. . . . On each of his works his glory is engraven in characters so bright, so distinct, and so illustrious, that none, however dull and illiterate, can plead ignorance as their excuse.

But the conceptual pressure from the larger message of the psalm tells us that not only was each individual species made perfectly but that God's wisdom is seen in the perfection of the way individual species relate to each other to form biotic communities occupying well-defined life zones.

17 The beginnings of an argument for a Christian environmentalism are found here. Since God loves and cares about these creatures, and since being a Christian means embracing and reflecting God's values, then it follows that we too should care for these creatures. Nash puts it this way: "Ethically, since fidelity to God implies loyalty to divine valuations and affections, we are called to image the values of the ultimate Valuer--indeed, to mirror the love of Christ toward all God's beloved, not only humanity" (Environmental Ethics, 108). This should not be read to imply that we love non-human creatures equally with humans. Instead the quality and quantity of our love should "mirror" that of God's. This way, as Nash more succinctly puts it, "Respect for biotic interests... is theocentric respect for the biotic values of God" (p. 109).

He makes springs pour water into the ravines;  
it flows between the mountains.  
They give water to all the beasts of the field;  
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.  
The birds of the air nest by the waters;  
they sing among the branches.  
The trees of the Lord are well watered,  
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.  
There the birds make their nests;  
the stork has its home in the pine trees.  

(vv. 10-12, 16-17)

This careful ordering of ecosystems is, says the psalmist, a demonstration of divine genius.

Closely related to this third contribution, in fact flowing out of it, is the fourth, which speaks of the impact of the perfection of the creation upon man. By the time the psalmist took up his pen, sin had long since invaded Eden and left its mark upon creation. Of this the psalmist is not unaware. He speaks of prowling lions roaring for their hapless prey (v. 21). He knows that terror and death are common among man and beast (v. 29). He does not avert his eyes from the destruction of earthquake and volcano (v. 32). He openly acknowledges the existence of wicked men (v. 35). He sees that nature is, in fact, "red in tooth and claw." Nonetheless, he observes creation and cannot restrain his praise.

Praise the Lord, O my soul.  
O Lord my God, you are very great;  
you are clothed with splendor and majesty. (v. 1)

How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you made them all. (v. 24)

May the glory of the Lord endure forever. (v. 31)  
I will sing to the Lord all my life;

I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. (v. 33)  
Praise the Lord, O my soul.  
Praise the Lord. (v. 35)

Despite the intrusion of sin and its marring effects there remains a powerful and clearly visible witness in creation to, as the apostle Paul puts it, the "eternal power and divine nature" of God (Rom 1:19-20). The heavens still declare the "glory of God" and the skies still proclaim his "handiwork" (Ps 19:1). Particular characteristics of God are revealed in his works. The author of Psalm 104 could actually see evidence of God's wisdom and wealth. Therefore he is
drawn to praise God for these specific attributes. Herein we see the
doxological value of creation.19

Psalm 104 presents more than just propositional truth. It models
for us the response appropriate to our discovery of God's manifest
presence in creation. As God's people are moved to cry "Glory!"
when they observe the thunderstorm approach from over the
Mediterranean (Ps 29:3-9); as Solomon is awestruck as he watches
one of God's eagles soaring the thermals (Prov 30:18-19); so should
we respond with appropriate humble praise when creation points us
beyond itself to an all-wise almighty God.

There are clear environmental implications here. If "all" of God's
works were made with wisdom, then each one has the ability to
speak to man of that wisdom. Thus every loss of species is a
diminution of man's opportunity to observe the perfection of God. In
John's vision of the heavenly throne he hears the elders sing to the
Lord, "You are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, for
you created all things" (Rev 4:11; emphasis added). Any destruction
of creation removes from man a cause for giving honor to God.

Every species, every ecosystem, reveals the wisdom of God and thus
exerts a powerful doxological influence.20 We must remember that
God also told at least all the birds and all the marine creatures to "be
fruitful and increase in number" (Gen 1:22; emphasis added). Thus
we must find a way to co-exist with these creatures in a mutual
fruitfulness, one which recognizes and honors the wisdom of the
Lord and lets "all things, their creator bless."21

19 John Calvin captures this so marvelously when he speaks of creation as "this
most beautiful theatre" of God's works (Institutes 1.14.20).
20 To this doxological influence might be added an evangelistic influence. Aldo
Leopold, the beloved patron saint of the environmental movement, was not without
religious leanings and a certain level of biblical literacy. In his journals he wrote,
"What value has wildlife from the standpoint of morals and religion? I heard of a boy
once who was brought up an atheist. He changed his mind when he saw that there
were a hundred-odd species of warblers, each bedecked like to the rainbow, and each
performing yearly sundry thousands of miles of migration about which scientists
wrote wisely but did not understand. No 'fortuitous concourse of elements' working
blindly through any number of millions of years could quite account for why warblers
are so beautiful. No mechanistic theory, even bolstered by mutations, has ever quite
answered for the colors of the cerulean warbler, or the vespers of the wood thrush, or
the swansong, or--goose music. I dare say this boy's convictions would be harder to
shake than those of many inductive theologians. There are yet many boys to be born
who, like Isaiah, 'may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the
hand of the Lord hath done this.' But where shall they see, and know, and consider?
In museums?" (Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold [Minocqua, WI:
21 Derr's backhanded dismissal of efforts to protect endangered species by
reference to two(!) cases of marginal relevance is both surprising and disturbing
(Environmental Ethics, 72). That habitat depletion and fragmentation at the hands
of human greed are endangering species is an incontestable fact. What is even more
disturbing is this statement made in reference to environmental choices we face:
"There is, moreover, very little of specifically or uniquely Christian content to such
decisions" (p. 76). For that to be true the word "Christian" would have to have a very
slim definition indeed.
B. Genesis 1-2

Given the fullness of Psalm 104 and its unique relationship with the opening chapters of Genesis, we will find, as we turn to those chapters, that much of their ground has already been covered. Thus we will treat a good part of the contribution of Genesis 1-2 in a more brief and summary form. There is one contribution of these chapters, however, which stands, in order of importance, second only to the statement that God is the creator of the universe. A primary concern of theology, much more, of a Christian environmentalism, must be that of determining mankind's proper place and role before God in the context of creation. It is in addressing this concern that Genesis 1-2 delivers its greatest value.

The contribution of Genesis 1-2 might be summarized as follows:
1. God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them.
2. All that which God created he pronounced good, i.e., it existed exactly as he intended it.
3. Of all his creation God created only man in his own image, thus causing man to occupy a position distinct from and above the rest of creation.
4. God blessed both human and non-human creation by imbuing both with powers of procreation and encouraging both to exercise those powers liberally.
5. God gave to mankind the responsibility of mastery over non-human creation, and he commanded him to exercise that mastery toward the preservation of, and fuller realization of, creation's goodness.

With reference to the first of these truths, not much more can be said than what Gen 1:1 so starkly announces out of the silence: "In the beginning God created. . . ." As many have observed, the profundity of these first five words of Scripture is almost without comparison. Only the great biblical statements of God's redemptive act, as found in places like John 3:16 and Rom 5:8, match the magnitude of this opening claim of the Bible. The first two chapters of Genesis give us two well known accounts of the creation history, each with a measure of detail, but their first truth is that all creation came into being because God called it into being.

God's creative activity was not without intentional design. When the Genesis account so regularly communicates God's observation of the "goodness" of his work (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31), it is telling us that things have turned out exactly as God wanted them. This is not to suggest to the reader of the account that some other possibility existed, i.e., that God might have botched it. These references to creation's goodness are not primarily there as a commentary on the quality of God's creativity and power. These things are assumed.
The references are there simply to tell the reader, and rather emphatically, that the creation perfectly is what God intended it to be. Each thing stands in its proper relationship to God, and each thing glorifies God by being exactly what God intended it to be.22

What did God intend creation to be? While the answer which Genesis 1-2 supplies to this question does not account for the entirety of God's intention for creation, it does speak very concretely of a specific part of God's intention. Apart from its repeated use throughout Genesis 1, which we have already noted, and apart from its use in the designation "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," the word translated "good" appears only twice in its positive sense (cf. the "not good" of Gen 2:18) in Genesis 1-2, and these two occurrences tell us something about God's intention for creation by telling us something about how creation is "good."

"Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground-trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food" (Gen 2:8, 9). Clearly the writer of Genesis wants us to understand that these trees God made to grow in Eden were designed with man in mind. He very intentionally made the fruit of those trees to be visually attractive to the human eye, tasty to the human palate, and nourishing for the human body. A few verses later we read that there is gold in the land of Havilah where the river Pishon flows and that "the gold of that land is good" (v. 12). Two other mineral substances are subsequently named, and each of these three substances has the distinction of being considered highly valuable by man. These things (and in particular the gold) are "good," the clear implication being that they are good by virtue of their usefulness to man.

By these two more casual references to the goodness of certain parts of creation the author of this account gives us some understanding of God's design for creation. God intended at least some parts of creation to be specifically for human nourishment and use and these parts are good in that they are what God intended them to be.23

The third significant contribution of Genesis 1-2 begins to move us in the direction of defining man's unique role in creation. While we will deal more fully with that specific role below it is necessary here to establish the distinctiveness of human creation. Robert Meye, in his essay "Invitation to Wonder: Toward a Theology of Nature,"24

22It is this that explains passages like Psalm 148, where all of creation, including "lightning and hail, snow and clouds, . . . mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, . . . young men and maidens, old men and children" (vv. 8-12), is seen as capable of praising God.

23About the intention of some other parts of creation and about the intention of creation as a whole we have already spoken under our treatment of Psalm 104.

24In Granberg-Michaelson, Tending the Garden, 30-49.
observes several details from the Genesis accounts which serve to highlight the uniqueness of man.

1. Creation on the sixth day, after all other creative work had been accomplished (Gen 1:31).
2. The unique language with which the divine decision to create [man] is announced. Instead of the impersonal imperative "Let there be," there is a divine statement in the first-person plural: "Let us make man in our image. . ." (Gen 1:26).
3. The creation of humankind in the image of God (Gen 1:27).
4. The special emphasis upon human creation as community: "Male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27).
5. The unique manner in which humans, male and female, are formed—the former from the dust of the ground, with the breath of life breathed directly into his nostrils (Gen 2:7); the latter with a rib taken from the side of Adam (Gen 2:21-22).
6. The granting to humankind of dominion over all things including all animals, no matter how strong or grand they might be (Gen 1:28).
7. Humankind's being granted the responsibility of naming the animals, which are brought before Adam by God himself (Gen 2:19-20).
8. Above all else, God's direct relationship with and address to humankind as the unique crown of creation (Gen 1:28ff.; 2:16ff.).

It is by virtue of this uniqueness and distinction, especially as represented in the imago Dei, that man finds himself "a little lower than God and crowned with glory and honor" with "all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea" put "under his feet" (Ps 8:5-8). To the implications of this position we will return momentarily.

But first a brief word about the fourth contribution of Genesis 1-2. It has already been observed that God's command to "be fruitful and increase in number" was spoken not just to man.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number

25Ibid., 28. This is not Meye's complete list.
"and fill the water in the seas and let the birds increase on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning—the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. (Gen 1:20-25)

The persistently repeated reference to each "kind" of animal tells us that God's blessing and his earnest encouragement continually to produce offspring was addressed to individual species. The writer takes pains to let us know that God clearly had every "kind" in mind. God blessed, he states, "every winged bird according to its kind." Unless we want to accuse God of duplicity, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that it is possible for man to be fruitful and multiply and each animal species to be fruitful and multiply at the same time. One should not negate the other. On the contrary, part of man's responsibility is precisely to preserve the God-intended fullness of creation. Historically what has stood in the way of this preservation is man's wrongful exercise of his dominion, a subject to which our passage now bids us turn.

The discussion of man's role and responsibility toward creation grows out of two well-defined moments in the Genesis narrative.

Then God said, "Let" us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Gen 1:26-28)

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. (Gen 2:15)

It is clear from these passages, especially the first, that man has been given some form of supremacy over the rest of creation. What is in question is the nature and purpose of that supremacy. Proponents of some form of Christian environmentalism have rightly accused their detractors of focusing too exclusively on the "dominion" passages in Genesis 1 and failing to honor the contribution of Genesis 2. On the other hand, some Christian environmentalists have been guilty of a too quick conflation of these texts, such that "have dominion" has been made to equal "take care
of." While certainly Gen 2:15 should inform our understanding of Gen 1:26-28, it needs to be noted that these two passages are not addressing the exact same point. Each needs to be understood on its own terms, and each needs to be given freedom to make its contribution to the larger issue of man's responsibility toward creation.

In their historical overview of the relationship between the Christian church and environmentalism, Grizzle, Rothrock, and Barrett list the "subjectionist perspective" as that which has defined the church's stance toward the environment for most of its history. They suggest that this position derives its primary inspiration from Gen 1:28, seeing it as "a call to bring the non-human environment into subjection for the purpose of facilitating human expansion." While clearly the terms "rule" (rada) and "subdue" (kabas) speak of mastery, and clearly these words spoken to man make of man a creature of singular status commissioned to exercise a God-given authority, the subjectionist position is, just as clearly, a result of misinterpreting these words. The call to rule over and subdue creation simply cannot bear the meaning "strong, forceful subjugation," given the context in which these words are spoken. God told Adam and Eve to "fill the earth and subdue it" by which he meant that man should exercise his God-given authority (i.e., "rule") over the earth as he gradually came to occupy more and more of it. And certainly, especially after the Fall, some of this exercise of authority would have to find expression in "forceful subjugation," for after the curse the creation would possess a resistance to man's dominion. But it is one thing to exercise physical and technological prowess over a garden or a cow or a grouse or a trout. It is something very different to "rule" in this way over all "the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Just how does one "forcefully subjugate" the great host of neo-tropical warblers? How the Arctic Tern with its almost unbelievable pattern of migration? And why would one want to?


This is Beisner's conclusion in "Imago Dei and the Population Debate," 184.

I am somewhat surprised by Beisner's apparent assumption that even before the Fall, creation is "something whose spontaneous tendency is to resist dominion" (ibid., 185). I believe Van Dyke is more accurate when he says, speaking of God's instruction to Adam to subdue the earth, "In a world without sin, we are not unkind to Adam to point out that this would have been neither a difficult nor an unpleasant task" (Redeeming Creation, 91).

While at first this brings to mind an exercise in futility, it is becoming increasingly clear that man can, indirectly, exercise that kind of power. But it is necessarily destructive of the creatures in view, and the Bible defines that kind of dominion as sin.
Not all of creation was created with man's physical needs in mind, and so significant portions of creation will not require this kind of subjection. And, as we've already observed, God's aim in Job 40-41 is to point out precisely our inability in many cases to rule in this way. Yet God clearly tells Adam to "rule" over all the creatures. While that rule may, and does, include some exercise of physical and technological force, clearly it speaks of something larger than that. Those who equate "dominion" with "subjugation" have committed the logical error of mistaking a part for the whole.

What then is meant by God's instruction to man to "rule over" creation? Fundamentally it is an announcement of the conferral of authority. Man is to act as the head of the household and is responsible to see that the household runs well and that all members of the household continue to function according to their God-appointed roles. While the exercise of that authority does include the freedom to use creation appropriately to sustain and nourish human life, man must not so exercise his authority as to be harmful to God's intentions for all creation. In fact, he must sometimes exercise his authority to protect and preserve God's creatures from human subjugation. His job, in short, is to function as God's steward and as such to continue to keep what God has created in conformity with his purposes and will for that creation. It is not primarily for our own well-being that we rule over creation but for God.31

Theologian and OT scholar William Dyrness has provided helpful direction in our effort to define human dominion. First, he makes the observation that the commission of the man and the woman to have dominion over creation must be understood in the context of God's ordering of the world to be fertile and productive, and his encouragement to man to enjoy that particular goodness. Second, he explores the meaning of the command to "rule" by comparing it to the demands placed on Israelite kings. He writes:

Since the word ["rule"] is that generally used of the rule of a king, I believe the key is to be found in the unique conception of "rule" that is developed in the Old Testament and that is specifically applied to Israel's kings. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 points out that Israel's king is to rule as a brother over brothers and sisters, is not to accumulate large amounts of gold, . . . Here is an organic rather

31There is, as one might expect, a persistent anthropocentrism operating within the subjectionist position. Indeed, they are virtually synonymous. Hence, Derr, even though he is willing to use a term like "stewardship," defines it as "preserving this world as a habitat fit for humanity" (Environmental Ethics, 32). "The steward's task," says Derr, "is responsible development" (p. 22) and it is clear that by development he means that which better serves mankind. The line between appropriate use and exploitation is a hard one to fix and an even harder one upon which to find wide agreement. For this reason I have a deep reluctance to affirm the use of the word "development" in an attempt to define stewardship, especially given what the word connotes in our day and even more because of the damage done to the environment at the hands of human "development." Again, if we could factor human greed out of human development we would be on safer ground.
than strictly monarchical view of kingship and ruling, . . . The rule that men and women are to exercise over creation, then, is one of servanthood, as a brother or sister "rules" over others in the family. 

Then, bringing his two ideas together, he summarizes:

If my thesis— that human dominion is best seen in the ideal rule of Israel's king—is valid, then we should expect that the righteous rule of the king would issue in a productive and fruitful environment, both human and nonhuman. And in Psalm 72, the great hymn of praise for the righteous king, this is precisely what we find:

Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.
He will judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.
The mountains will bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness. . . .
Let grain abound throughout the land;
on the tops of the hills may it sway.
Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon;
let it thrive like the grass of the field.
(vv. 1-3,16)

This rule is both a reflection of God's own righteous rule and an expression of God's purposes for all who bear his image and exercise his dominion. . . . Clearly, goodness and fertility are assumed to be natural characteristics of the earth, and the man and the woman are merely to facilitate and enjoy this bounty.

In a similar vein, essayist Wendell Berry has supplied a helpful categorization. He speaks of two possibilities in man, "exploitation" and "nurture." Because of the usefulness of these terms to our present discussion I will allow Berry to develop his idea completely.

Let me outline as briefly as I can what seem to me to be the characteristics of these opposite kinds of mind. I conceive a strip-miner to be a model exploiter, and as a model nurturer I take the old-fashioned idea or ideal of a farmer. The exploiter is a specialist, an expert; the nurturer is not. The standard of the exploiter is efficiency; the standard of the nurturer is care. The exploiter's goal is money, profit; the nurturer's goal is health—his land's health, his own, his family's, his community's, his country's. Whereas the exploiter asks of a piece of land only how much and how quickly it

33Ibid., 54. So tied is man's exercise of dominion to the preservation of creation-wide fertility that God set down laws by which his people were to maintain an ecological sensitivity in their cultivation of the earth. The instruction to give the land a Sabbath rest (Lev 25:1-5) is only the best known of these laws.
can be made to produce, the nurturer asks a question that is much more complex and difficult: What is its carrying capacity? (That is: How much can be taken from it without diminishing it? What can it produce dependably for an indefinite time?) The exploiter wishes to earn as much as possible by as little work as possible: the nurturer expects, certainly, to have a decent living from his work, but his characteristic wish is to work as well as possible. The competence of the exploiter is in organization; that of the nurturer is in order--a human order, that is, that accommodates itself both to other order and to mystery. The exploiter typically serves an institution or organization; the nurturer serves land, household, community, place. The exploiter thinks in terms of numbers, quantities, "hard facts"; the nurturer in terms of character, condition, quality, kind.  

Berry's comments serve as something of a parable for us. When God commanded man to "rule over" creation he commanded him to do so as a nurturer, not as an exploiter.

It is in the light of this understanding of Gen 1:26-28 that the more specific responsibility given to Adam as recorded in Gen 2:15 makes most sense. Adam is placed in the garden to serve (‘abad) and preserve (samar) it. He is, in other words, to exercise his dominion over the garden by managing it so as to preserve it, to enable it continually to achieve those purposes God has for it. Thus his dominion is one of service, serving-cultivating and protecting--the creation and thereby serving the creation's owner.

C. Gen 9:8-17

The contribution of Gen 9:8-17 is single and simple but essential to a Christian environmentalism.

God has established an everlasting covenant with all living creatures of every kind wherein he has promised never again to destroy them by the waters of a flood.

The covenant contained in Genesis 9 is usually understood as presenting a promise to Noah and his family and through them to all their descendants. In fact, theologians are wont to refer to this as the Noachian covenant. It would be more aptly designated as the Creation covenant, for in it God makes abundantly clear that his promise is for every living creature.

Perhaps the most striking formal feature of the covenant is the remarkable density of repetition. In the space of these ten verses there are eight occurrences of the word "covenant," three references to the "sign" of the rainbow, three repetitions of the promise to "never again destroy by flood." Propositionally speaking, the entire

34W. Berry, The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1977) 7.
passage could be reduced to the space of one verse without any loss of content. The actual length of the covenantal pronouncement is due to a prolixity of passionate emphasis, and the thing that is emphasized above everything else is that this covenant is made with "all life" (kol basar), with "every living creature" (kol nepes hahayya).

Nine times God reiterates this point, and it is clear from the emphasis they receive and the positions these reiterations occupy that God wants the point to be clear.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: "I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you--the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you--every living creature on the earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth." And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth." So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth."

As Steven Bouma-Prediger observes, "This everlasting covenant, God's first and original covenant--before the covenants with Abraham or Moses or David--is with all creation."35

Clearly God is communicating through this covenant that all creation matters to him and that it is his determination to preserve it without diminution. And as the covenant speaks of God's solemn intention to preserve creation, it also begins to communicate, in an anticipatory way, his intention to redeem creation. Here someone may protest and accuse me of over-interpretation. After all, the covenant merely promises that there will never again be destruction by flood. Further extrapolation is unwarranted. But the covenant does speak beyond its own explicit promise. At minimum it says that God sees bird and beast as worthy of covenantal protection. He is not reluctant to group them with humans under one covenant. This itself speaks more broadly than the limits of the specific promise might at first suggest. But, more than that, it can be legitimately inferred that this covenant is representative of God's long-term intention ultimately and finally to redeem all of creation. This is an "everlasting covenant" (berit 'olam)-like the ones made with

35"Is Christianity Responsible for the Ecological Crisis?" 153.
Abraham and with Israel—a "covenant for all generations to come."

It would seem strange for God to make such a covenant to preserve creatures from destruction by water and to express that covenant so poignantly, only to let them be destroyed by some other means. If it tells us anything, Gen 9:8-17 tells us that in God's covenantal economy, the destiny of every living creature is somehow linked with ours. It is precisely this point that the apostle Paul picks up in our final passage.

**D. Rom 8:18-23**

While it is in the climactic movement of the final chapters of Revelation that the hope of Christian environmentalism finds its most poetic and perhaps most eloquent expression, it is in Paul's letter to the Romans that the theological context for that hope is most clearly set forth. The primary contribution of Rom 8:18-23 can be summarized as follows:

1. Nonhuman creation was cursed by God as a consequence of man's sin. This curse has profoundly affected all of creation by keeping it from realizing God's original intention for it.
2. However, the condition in which creation presently exists is temporary, for at some point in the future, in connection with the glorification of the children of God, all of creation will be set free from the curse and the ongoing effects of man's sinfulness and will enjoy a glorious renewal of its ability to be as it was created to be.

The controlling reference point for Rom 8:18-23 is, without question, the fall of man into sin as recorded in Genesis 3. It is this that provides both the historical and theological context for our passage. When Paul tells us that "creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it" (v. 20), he is making a somewhat veiled but no less certain reference to God's chilling judgment on Adam recorded in Gen 3:17: "Cursed is the ground because of you." Though Paul simply refers to "the creation" in his first three references to it (vv. 19, 20, 21), in his fourth reference he speaks of "the whole creation" (v. 22) and by so doing communicates that no part of creation has been left unaffected by man's sin.36

Paul presents two specific consequences of this curse on creation. First, creation was "subjected to frustration" (v. 20). We have already

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observed that when God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in the earth he did so with specific intentions for his creation. In his cursing of creation God is purposefully frustrating his own intentions such that creation is kept from fulfilling the purpose of its existence. Creation therefore groans as a woman painfully and precariously halted in childbirth. But more than just being halted in the realization of the purpose of its existence, creation also finds itself falling apart in the meantime. It is in "bondage to decay" (v. 21), the very opposite of its original condition of fertility and good health. In short, creation was devastated by man's sin.

And as man continues to sin he continues to bring havoc on creation, both by his own direct action and by inviting the judgment of God. This is the consistent witness of the OT prophets.

Hear the word of the Lord, you Israelites, because the Lord has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed. Because of this the land mourns, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying." (Hos 4:1-3)

"I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. "I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. (Zeph 1:2-3)

"My people are fools; they do not know me. They are senseless children; they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil; they know not how to do good." I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty; and at the heavens and their light was gone. I looked at the mountains and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. I looked and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. I looked and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the Lord, before his fierce anger. (Jer 4:22-26)

Especially in this last passage, with its haunting references to the creation narratives of Genesis, we face the specter of the possible undoing of the physical world because of sin. The consistent testimony of Scripture is that creation suffers and is out of whack as a result of man's sinfulness. It is in "eager anticipation" of its "liberation" from these consequences that creation presently "waits,"

37This fact forces us to a more nuanced understanding of human stewardship which: 1) takes into consideration the cursedness of creation; and 2) recognizes that to the duty of preserving creation must be added the duty of restoring creation.
and it is to this future redemption of creation that Rom 8:18-23 speaks most eloquently.\textsuperscript{38}

The images Paul uses to speak of this future redemption are powerfully emotive: the removal of an absolutely frustrating encumbrance, liberation from a killing servitude, the successful completion of a seemingly endless travail. But it is in his phrase "glorious freedom" (v. 21) that Paul strikes the most potent chord, for here he speaks of the return of creation to a state in which it can once again freely and perfectly fulfill God's purpose for it and by so doing participate in the general glory which will one day be revealed, not only in us, but as the controlling characteristic of Christ's eternal kingdom. Creation personified sees its destiny as inextricably linked with ours. On the day when we are revealed as sons of God (v. 19), and glory is revealed in us (v. 18), the day when our bodies are redeemed (v. 23), creation too will experience redemption at the hands of the one "by [whom] all things were created" and "through [whom] all things" will be reconciled to God (Col 1:16, 20).

\textit{III. CONCLUSION}

This article began with a poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins which laments man's carelessness toward the earth. It ends with another Hopkins's poem which speaks, even in the face of the appropriate and serious concern enjoined by the first, an optimism which arises out of a God-centered confidence that creation will not be a casualty of human history but instead will be ultimately renewed under God's tender redemptive care.

\textbf{GOD'S GRANDEUR}

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like the shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

\textsuperscript{38}It is important to point out that Paul's primary focus in Rom 8:18-25 is on the coming glory of believers and the confident expectation they can have in that future hope. However, one simply cannot dismiss the concern with creation in this passage. There is a theological perspective which wants to do this. Representative of this perspective, which limits the history of redemption to the history of human redemption, is Derr, \textit{Environmental Ethics}, 31-2. For a fuller representation and critique of this perspective see Santmire, \textit{The Travail of Nature}, 3-7.
And for all this, nature is never spent:
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs--
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! Bright wings.

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WOMAN'S DESIRE FOR MAN: GENESIS 3:16 RECONSIDERED

IRVIN A. BUSENITZ

Lexical and etymological studies of the words of Gen 3:16b yield little help for interpreting the meaning of the woman's desire for man. Contextual evidence, however, indicates that the woman's desire for the man and his rule over her are not the punishment but the conditions in which the woman will suffer punishment. Although there are linguistic and thematic parallels between Gen 3:16b and Gen 4:7, contextual differences and interpretive problems indicate that Gen 4:7 cannot be used to interpret the meaning of "desire" in Gen 3:16. Cant 7:10[11] provides a better context for understanding the word. It may be concluded that, in spite of the Fall, the woman will have a longing for intimacy with man involving more than sexual intimacy.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

ALTHOUGH in the past few decades there has been a proliferation of books and articles discussing biblical norms for the role of women both in society and in the church, a consensus of interpretation has not emerged. The complexity of the issue, coupled with the exegetical difficulty of relevant Scripture, has made general agreement elusive. Part of the discussion has focused upon the last phrase of Gen 3:16: "yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Various interpretations have been propounded for the meaning of this phrase, centering primarily around the definition of "desire." One prominent interpretation suggests that, as a punishment for the Fall, a woman's desire will be subject to her husband's. "Her desire, whatever it may be, will not be her own. She cannot do what she wishes, for her husband rules over her like a despot and whatever she wishes is subject

1 All biblical quotations from NASB unless otherwise noted.
to his will."\(^2\) Another viewpoint contends that the woman will have an immense longing, yearning, and psychological dependence.\(^3\) More recently a third view has surfaced. It suggests that, based on the usage of "desire" in Gen 4:7, the woman will desire to dominate the relationship with her husband. "The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can."\(^4\)

LEXICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Hebrew term rendered "desire" is נָבַשְׁתָּּּ and is derived from נָבֶש. It is given the general lexical meaning of "attract, impel, of desire, affection";\(^5\) however, due to its infrequent occurrence in the OT (Gen 3:16; 4:7; Cant 7:10[11]),\(^6\) the semantic range is unclear. The etymological data is equally obscure. The word may be related historically to the Arabic saqa (which is often used in contexts indicating sexual desire) or saqa (which is used in a more general sense of desire).\(^7\) Nevertheless, saqa does not demand sexual connotations and saqa does not rule them out.\(^8\) In light of its usage in Gen 4:7, the term appears to have a meaning which is broader than sexual desire.

Perhaps the translators of the LXX attempted to clarify their understanding of the term by translating it with ἀποστροφή in Gen 3:16 and 4:7, but with ἐπιστροφή in Cant 7:10[11]. The preposition ἀ'πό, when attached to the verb στρέφω, suggests "to turn away," while ἐ'πί suggests "to turn toward." However, it is difficult to understand

\(^2\) E. J. Young, *Genesis 3* (London: Banner of Truth, 1966) 127; cf. John Calvin, *Genesis* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 172, who contends that 3:16b is an example of Hebrew poetry in which a thought is restated in a subsequent phrase. As such, "and he shall rule over you" is a reassertion of "your desire shall be to your husband."


\(^5\) BDB, 1003. The definition given by Koehler and Baumgartner (KB, 1. 1043) is similar: "impulse, urge."

\(^6\) The significance of the term as used in these three passages is treated below. The number in brackets refers to the versification of the Hebrew text.

\(^7\) Foh (*Women, 67*) seeks to remove any sexual connotation from "desire" in 3:16b by contending that "the phonemic equivalent of the Hebrew s [נ of נבשת] is s in Arabic. The proper etymology in Arabic for נבשת is saqa, to urge or drive on. This meaning need not have sexual connotations."

\(^8\) In either case, etymology is often of little help in ascertaining meaning, which is determined by context and usage.
how Gen 4:7 could embody any idea of "turning away." Furthermore, the terms are virtually synonymous in meaning in noun form, so that the change in prepositional prefix is "unconvincing" as an interpretation and "quite unnecessary."

The Tg. Onq. translates the term with יִ toDate, long for." While it does not occur in the Aramaic portions of the OT, its Hebrew equivalent is recorded in Ps 119:20: "My soul is crushed with longing [יְבָרֹך] after Thine ordinances at all times."

The other terms used in Gen 3:16 are even less helpful (when treated individually) for determining the meaning of the text. The verb "to rule," from לָשֵׁנ, is employed both here and in 4:7. The LXX translates the term in 3:16 with κυρίεων, which means "to lord it over," but uses a verb form of ἄρχω ("to rule over") in 4:7, possibly to depict a more governmental, autocratic concept. Similarly, little significance can be attached to the interchange of the prepositions (3:16; 4:7) and לֶשֶׁנ (Cant 7:10[11]). The Hebrew language frequently employs the two prepositions interchangeably, with apparent indis-

Ultimately, the effort to achieve exegetical clarity cannot be propelled by lexical or etymological information, for the data revealed

9 The same should be said of Gen 3:16 also, for even understanding to mean a desire for domination and control does not essentially incorporate a "turning away" concept.

10 The meaning assigned to both terms in BAGD (100, 301) is "to turn toward."


13 Some have contended that κυρίεων connotes the idea of establishing one in an office over another. If this were true it would suggest that the husband was not installed in the "office" of leader/headship until after the Fall. Yet 1 Tim 2:12-14 implies that the role of headship was divinely ordained prior to the fall. Equally untenable is the following analysis: "This is obviously neither an intensification nor a warping of a pre-existing hierarchy between the sexes for no such hierarchy is alluded to" (Victor P. Hamilton, "הַנֶּשֶׁר," in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, ed. R. Laird Harris, Bruce K. Waltke, and Gleason L. Archer, Jr. [2 vols; Chicago: Moody, 1980] 20 913). While Genesis 1-3 does not specifically refer to a preexisting hierarchy, it is alluded to in a multiplicity of ways in the opening chapters. Examples include the purpose of woman's creation (2:18) and the naming of woman (2:23). Furthermore, it is specifically stated elsewhere in Scripture that a hierarchical structure between man and woman antedated the Fall (1 Tim 2:12-14; I Cor 11:3-12).

14 BAGD, 113.

15 Cf. BDB, 41. Numerous examples of this interchange exist in the OT (e.g., I Sam 1:10, 26; I Sam 25:25). While the "physical motion toward" idea of לֶשֶׁנ can also encompass the concept of "against," as it does in Gen 4:8, it is made evident only by the context. Since such a thought is not inherent in the context of 3:16, one should not be too quick to read the idea of "against" back into it.
by such is dim and inconclusive. Lexically and etymologically, the term "Qw" is shrouded in obscurity; the verb "lwMmA" and the prepositions "lx" and "lfa" are equally impotent to unlock the meaning of Gen 3:16.

**CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While the study of each of the terms does not shed much light on the meaning of Gen 3:16, the context does. In Gen 3:15 the mention of woman serves as a point of transition to v 16 where the Lord pronounces judgment upon the woman. A similar connection is provided between v 16 and v 17; the mention of the husband in v 16b allows for a smooth transition to the judgment pronounced upon the man in vv 17-19.

The first thing to be noted by the context is the fact that each recipient of God's judgment receives one punishment. In the case of the serpent (3:14), he would move on his belly: similarly, Satan (3:15) receives one judgment—a death blow administered by the seed of the woman.\(^{16}\) In the judgment upon man (3:17-19), the ground will not readily yield its fruit. In Gen 4:11, Cain too is the recipient of only one punishment. Consequently, in 3:16 woman is probably the recipient of only one judgment.

Second, in each of the judgments which God pronounced in Gen 3:14-19 and 4:11-12, the nature of the curse has no essential relationship to the nature of the sin committed. The ground not readily yielding its fruit has no essential relationship to Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit; the fact that the serpent would now crawl on the ground has no integral connection to his enticing conversation with the woman. Consequently, one should not assume that the woman's punishment is to be sealed forever under the control of her husband, because she stepped out of her divinely ordained role of submission and followed the admonition of the devil.

Third, the judgments given to the woman and the man (3:16-19) revolve around propagation and seed.\(^ {17}\) "Both sentences involve

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\(^{16}\) This argument follows the view that Satan is being addressed in v 15. It is doubtful that the term "enmity" (נִשְׂדָּה) can be limited merely to a hostility between man and beast, for elsewhere the term is employed only of enmity between morally responsible agents (cf. Num 35:21, 22; Ezek 25:15; 35:5). Furthermore, if the v 15 judgment refers to the serpent, then it is essentially no judgment at all, for animals in general exist under a similar relationship with man.

\(^{17}\) The opening statement of 3:16: "I will greatly multiply your pain and your conception" is probably a hendiadys—an idiomatic phrase referring to pain which results from pregnancy. In addition to the fact that it is doubtful if an increased fertility cycle would constitute a punishment, the next phrase combines the two thoughts: "in pain you shall bring forth children." Cf. Cassuto's suggestion (Genesis, I. 165) that "a better interpretation is: your suffering in general, and more particularly that of your child bearing."
pain/toil, and both affect the bringing forth of life, human and otherwise." The context speaks not of the desire of woman to rule the man but of the continuation of life in the face of death. Such is the central element of 3:16a. Such is the focal point of 3:17-19. Thus, there is good cause to believe that the same idea is present in 3:16b.

Fourth, in the contextual development of Genesis 3 the woman is specifically addressed in 3:16, while the man is the object of God's pronouncement of judgment in 3:17-19. If the "desire" of 3:16b is the desire of the woman to control and dominate her husband, then the sentence is no longer a judgment upon the woman; rather, it is the man who bears its brunt. Yet man's judgment is not mentioned until 3:17. "Since the punishment was specifically intended for the woman and her female descendants, and was not a penalty shared with the men, it had inevitably to be of a nature restricted to the female sex."19

Fifth, in each of the punishments the pronouncement is given first, then an explanatory statement follows. In the case of the serpent (3:14) the explanatory phrase is "And dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Serpents are not dust-eaters per se; rather, the phrase is an explanatory elaboration of the fact that they would crawl around on their bellies. In 3:15 the punishment is essentially enunciated in the phrase "And I will put enmity between your seed and her seed," with the subsequent phrase denoting the extent of that enmity, namely, death. In 3:17-19 the punishment directed toward Adam is the cursing of the ground (3:17a); 3:17b-19 is explanatory, describing how this punishment would affect Adam and his descendants.20 The same is true in 3:16; the last phrase must be closely related contextually to the punishment recorded in 3:16a. Since each of the explanatory statements in 3:14, 3:15, and 3:17-19 is inseparably linked to the judgment statement, it would be exegetically inadvisable to divide 3:16 into two separate, unrelated punishments. Rather, 3:16b is elaborating on 3:16a. The "desire factor" is not a part of the judgment but an explanation of conditions and relationships as they will exist after the Fall. Even though the intimacy between the first man and his wife was abrogated,21

18 Foh, *Women*, 67. The judgment of both the woman and the man affects their physical being. For the woman, pregnancy and childbirth will be accompanied by great hardship and toil. The judgment on man will also involve hard labor (note the same word [בָּשֶׂת = pain] used in both 3:16 and 3:17).
20 Cf. Gen 4: 11-12 where the punishment of Cain is a further cursing of the ground (4:11), while the statement that he would be a vagrant and wanderer on the earth (4:12) is an explanation of the judgment, describing the extent and impact of it.
21 God's words in Gen 3:16b do not "destroy the harmony of marriage" (Foh, "Woman's Desire," 383), for such harmony was broken earlier (cf. "his wife" of 2:24, 25; 3:8 with "the woman" and the phrase, "which You gave to me, she gave. . . " in 3:12). Though Eve is later called "his wife," the initial intimacy appears to be gone.
even though the unity with man would bring woman to the threshold of death itself in the process of childbirth" yet woman would still possess a strong desire to be with man. The broken intimacy and the pain in childbearing would not be allowed to nullify the yearning of woman for man and the fulfillment of God's command to populate the earth or to alter the divine order of the headship of man.

It is equally tenuous to maintain that the phrase "and he shall rule over you" was given because Eve had usurped the authority and leadership role of Adam when she took and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The sin of the first woman was not that she took the lead without seeking the prior counsel of Adam. No such prior consultation was needed, for she herself knew God's commandment prohibiting them from eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17). The woman's sin was that she exalted herself above her Creator. She took it upon herself to determine, together with the counsel of the serpent, if God's law was good or bad, if it was right or wrong. Her sin had nothing to do with denying Adam his rightful role of leadership in their marriage or with grasping a role that belonged to her husband. The only role that Eve usurped was that of God's, a usurpation that is characteristic of all acts of sin of all people living in all times of the history of mankind.

Woman may desire to dominate or rule over man, but it is not a part of the punishment pronounced upon woman; it is just the essence, character, and result of all sin against God. Self-exaltation and pride always result in the desire to dominate and rule. Every person to some extent desires to dominate and rule over others--not just woman over man.23

GENESIS 4:7

One of the two passages most directly related to this discussion is Gen 4:7. While there are linguistic and thematic parallels between this verse and Gen 3:16, there are also differences. Furthermore, the

22 This element should not be dismissed too readily, for there is every reason to believe that the broken intimacy, together with the deadly pain of childbirth, would be sufficient to place the command to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (1:28) in jeopardy (cf. also Gen 11:4, 9).

23 The NT commands to submit to the husband's authority (Eph 5:22; Col 3:18; I Pet 3:1) do not suggest that woman's desire to rule over man is a part of the Genesis 3 judgment. These passages incorporate admonitions directing slaves to submit to their masters, children to obey their parents, and younger men to submit to their elders, indicating that non submissive attitudes and actions are the result of sin. To be certain, women may seek to usurp authority not rightfully theirs. But it is an action which is the consequence of sin and not a result of the judgment of Gen 3:16.
interpretation of Gen 4:7 faces unique difficulties all its own. Generally speaking, there have been two interpretations. The less common interpretation posits Abel as the antecedent of ḥepʿ šā ("his desire"), suggesting that if Cain does what is right, then he will be lifted up and restored to his position of preeminence which formed a part of his birthright as the older brother. "From the latter clause of the verse it is evident that God alludes to the prerogatives of the birthright which Cain would be in no danger of losing if his conduct were such as it ought to be." This interpretation embodies at least two favorable aspects. The first is contextual, for it readily accounts for the actions of Cain toward Abel in the following verse. The second is grammatical, for in ḥepʿ šā ("his desire") the pronominal suffix is masculine. If the antecedent were "sin [תִּשְׁאָל] crouching at the door," one would expect a feminine pronominal suffix, since תִּשְׁאָל is feminine.

A more common understanding of Gen 4:7 is that sin, pictured as a wild beast, is waiting to pounce upon and control its victim. "The fem. תִּשְׁאָל is construed as a masculine, because sin is personified as a wild beast, lurking at the door of the human heart, and eagerly desiring to devour his soul (1 Pet. v. 8)." This view benefits from the closeness of the pronominal suffix ("his desire") to the antecedent ("sin crouching at the door"); yet, despite the personification of sin as a wild beast, it suffers from the discord of gender.

Regardless of which view one espouses, neither is sufficiently certain to allow it to become the basis for establishing the meaning of קָשֵׁש in Gen 3:16. It is readily admitted that there are some noteworthy similarities between Gen 4:7 and Gen 3:16. Both are given in a context of divine judgment. Both come from the hand of the same writer. Both employ similar terminology. It is true that "the proximity of Genesis 4:7 to Genesis 3:16 suggests that a similar grammatical construction

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24 Many commentators readily admit that the verse is one of the most difficult in all of the OT to explicate. Skinner (Genesis, 107) has observed: "Every attempt to extract a meaning from the verse is more or less of a tour de force, and it is nearly certain that the obscurity is due to deep-seated textual corruptions." Suggested textual emendations are feeble at best and have generated little light.

25 The term תִּשְׁאָל ("lifted up") is used in Gen 49:3 in the sense of "preeminence." In this view "desire" would mean "to be subservient to" as to the firstborn of the family (cf. Gen 27:29).


27 The disaffectionate relationship which developed between Esau and Jacob over the matter of birthright (Genesis 27) is significantly analogous.


would have similar meaning. But since Gen 4:7 is besieged with interpretive uncertainties, it ought not to be applied unreservedly to interpret Gen 3:16.

Furthermore, Gen 4:7 is not as parallel to Gen 3:16 as it may appear. First of all, Gen 4:7 is figurative while Gen 3:16 is literal. Hermeneutically, one should proceed from the literal usage to the figurative usage if one's exegesis is to have validity. Second, while the grammatical construction is similar, the two phrases are actually inverted in sense. In 4:7 the object of the desire (Cain) is also the recipient of the curse. However, in 3:16 the object of the desire (the man) is not the recipient of the curse. For 3:16 to be truly parallel with 4:7, the desire of woman would have to be part of the judgment against the man. Third, similarity in grammar need not demand similarity of meaning. Verbal parallelism may be only coincidental. As shown above, the context of Gen 3:16 does not indicate that the woman desires to dominate her husband. If it is to be found in Gen 3:16, it must be imported from Gen 4:7. However, the context of Genesis 3 must be given the primary role in determining the meaning of "desire" in 3:16 rather than the linguistic resemblance between 3:16 and 4:7. The thematic links between Genesis 2-3 and Genesis 4 neither suggest nor imply that, as a part of the judgment of Gen 3:16, woman will desire to dominate man. For example, in Genesis 2-3 there is intimacy between God and man; then sin turns that intimacy to alienation. There is intimacy between man and woman; then sin causes intimacy to become alienation. In Genesis 4, intimacy between God and Cain turns to alienation, and intimacy between Cain and Abel turns to alienation. But in each case the broken intimacy, alienation, and punishment are not allowed to go beyond God's intended extent.

In the example of Cain, his death would be strongly avenged (Gen 4:15). The thematic relationship suggests that such is the case in Gen 3:16b. The alienation between man and woman and the pain of childbirth resulting from intimacy, would not be allowed to interrupt woman's desire for man, man's rulership over woman, or the carrying out of the command to populate the earth (Gen 1:28).

CANTICLES 7:10[11]
Cant 7:10[11] contains the third Occurrence of the word יָדַע: "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me." While the meaning of יָדַע may

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30 Foh, Women, 69.
31 It is difficult to perceive how one could determine how sin desires Cain and then utilize that as the basis for determining how woman desires man.
33 Scripture is replete with instances of divinely established parameters in the punishment of mankind (cf., e.g., Exod 20:25; 21:23-25).
be difficult to determine precisely in its two previous occurrences, there is little doubt here. It speaks clearly of the natural power and compulsion of the love of an individual for another. The slightest hint of one desiring to dominate the other is totally absent. Says Zockler: “הַשְּׁנָת as in Gen. iii.16, the passage which lies at the basis of this, [speaks] of the longing desire of the man for the society of his wife, not of gross sensual desires for sexual intercourse. The whole is a triumphant exclamation in which Shulamith joyfully affirms that her lover cannot exist without her.”

It appears that the usage of בִּשְׁנָה in Canticles is closer to that of Gen 3:16 than is Gen 4:7, notwithstanding the latter's grammatical similarities and textual proximity. First of all, the plain must be employed to interpret the obscure and difficult if there are contextual reasons to believe that both usages are similar. Such is the case between Gen 3:16 and Cant 7:10[11]. The abundantly clear meaning of "desire" in Cant 7:10 [11] should be given priority in the determination of the meaning of "desire" in Gen 3:16. Second, "desire" is used literally in Cant 7:10[11], just as it is in Gen 3:16; in Gen 4:7 the usage is figurative. Third, in distinction from Gen 4:7, both Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16 address relationships between the opposite sexes. As such Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16 share a contextual relationship which is foreign to Gen 4:7.

The true difficulty, then, is not understanding the meaning of "desire" as used in Cant 7:10[11] and Gen 3:16, but as it is used in Gen 4:7. This is noted indirectly by Skinner in his comment on Gen 4:7: "The word בִּשְׁנָה is unsuitable, whether it be understood of the wild beast's eagerness for its prey or the deference due from a younger brother to an older." The reason בִּשְׁנָה is so unsuitable is because the other two usages speak of the power of attraction between the sexes. To grant Gen 4:7 in its obscurity a determinative role in the interpretation of Gen 3:16 without permitting the clarity of Cant 7:10[11] to permeate the exegetical process is to abandon hermeneutical discernment and propriety.

CONCLUSION

The central consideration in the interpretation of Gen 3:16b is context; the meaning of "desire" is best determined in the light of its

34 Otto Zockler, *The Song of Solomon in Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, by J. P. Lange (tr. & ed. by Philip Schaff; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.) 119. The rendering "I am my beloved's, and it is an obligation upon me to desire him" is grammatically permissible, especially in light of a similar poetical use of הָבִיחַ in Prov 7: 14. However, it is doubtful on contextual grounds, for elsewhere the phrase "I am my beloved's" (6:3; cf. 2: 16) connotes reciprocity.

35 Cf. BDB, 1003.

immediate contextual setting. The context bespeaks procreation and the continuation of life, not the desire to dominate. Furthermore, to appeal to Gen 4:7 with its manifold obscurities to unlock the interpretive door of Gen 3:16 is to throw exegetical caution to the wind. It is much safer to apply the meaning of ἅφωτη in Cant 7:10[11] to Gen 3:16, for while it does not enjoy the near proximity of Gen 4:7, its meaning is plain and its interpretation is virtually unquestioned. Consequently, it should be granted preeminence over Gen 4:7 and become the primary cross-reference in ascertaining the meaning of "desire."

The text does not sustain the interpretation that one aspect of the woman's judgment is that she will desire to dominate and control the man. The last phrase of Gen 3:16 is not a part of the judgment; it is an explanation and description of conditions which will exist after the fall. Thus, the last phrase could be translated: "yet you will still desire [as you did before the Fall, though now tainted by sin] your husband, and he will still rule [as he did before the Fall, though now tainted by sin] over you." The alienation, broken intimacy, and pain in childbirth resulting from the Fall will not be allowed to annul that desire nor abrogate the command to be fruitful.

In spite of the fact that man will rule over woman, and in spite of the fact that intimacy may result in the pain (and possible death) due to childbirth, yet woman will desire and yearn for man. The issue is broader than purely sexual but does not exclude the sexual element. This interpretation does not imply that woman's sexual drives are stronger than the man's. While it is generally concluded that the man has the stronger sexual desire, such is to be expected, for there was nothing in the judgment upon man to temper it. On the other hand, the woman must deal with the pain of childbirth; thus it is to be expected that the woman's sexual desires would be somewhat moderated. Nevertheless, woman's desire for man is an attraction which cannot be uprooted from her nature. The contention that "sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband" is unquestionably true. But it is a natural consequence of sin, not a result of God's judgment on the woman in Gen 3:16! Just as the sin-corrupted headship of the husband is not a part of the divine judgment upon the man but a consequence of sin, so the sin-corrupted submission of the wife is not a part of the judgment; it is the result of sin.

37 Foh, Women, 69.
38 While some may contend that the women's liberation movement of recent years does not corroborate this interpretation (Foh, Women, 67), the opposite may actually be the case. Many of the women who speak out strongly against the headship of man nevertheless do get married and do bear their husband's children. Certainly it cannot be maintained that this interpretation is contrary to the broader historical perspective.
IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO ORGANIC EVOLUTION?*

JAMES O. BUSWELL, III

I

For over one hundred years there has been a continuous controversy, between evolutionists and anti-evolutionists over the body of data and theory of the origin, antiquity, and development of life and of man. While the controversy has been continuous, it has by no means been uniform. For a long time each dogmatically defended positions of some truth mixed with considerable error, in violent and fruitless debate, whose brilliance was in many cases mostly oratorical or literary. As the factual and scientific aspects of the evolutionary position increased and became more widely accepted, however, the bases for the anti-evolutionary or creationist1 opposition remained comparatively constant, with the result that, while the anti-evolutionists continued to actively oppose the evolutionist position, their attacks were less and less frequently reciprocated. Finally the evolutionist's entanglements with anti-evolutionists dwindled to an occasional defense or debate, the last of which of any consequence in this country was the famous Scopes trial of 1925. Interaction still persists in the British Commonwealth, however, chiefly due to the seemingly tireless efforts of the Evolution Protest Movement with active branches in London, Australia, and New Zealand.

Quite another pattern also emerges from a general review of this question. It is quite evident that in the view each has taken, and still takes of the other, whether in opposition or reaction, there is a tremendous degree of ignorance as to progress made in the past hundred years. The creationist exhibits in almost all of his anti-evolutionary literature an antiquated, "moth-ball" variety of "ever onward, ever upward" conception of evolutionism reminiscent of the latter nineteenth century, while the evolutionist on his part tends to identify all creationists with an immutability of species - deluge geology -- Ussher chronology type of position, sometimes referred to as "hyperorthodox", or "hyper-traditionalist."2

* This article constitutes part of Mr. Buswell's chapter in the forthcoming book, One Hundred Years After Darwin, scheduled for publication by Eerdmans in the late spring.
1. For present purposes other "anti-" evolutionary views like neo-Darwinian, or neo-Lamarckian, or other variations within scientific circles are ignored.
2. The term "hyperorthodox" has been recently brought into prominence by Dr. Bernard Ramm (1954: 27-31 et passim). Because of its relationship to the terms "fundamentalist" and "orthodox" and because of rather consistent objection
The complicating factor in all this is that while the anti-evolutionist is wrong in his usual appraisal of evolution today, the creationist position is still widely represented by the hyper-traditionalist point of view, from which has split a Creationist group which seeks to keep itself up-to-date scientifically while adopting a non-evolutionary rather than to its use, it should be clearly defined and its usage clarified. The term "fundamentalist" is today the most widely known label for the Bible-believing creationist in scientific circles. It is important, however, to understand the crucial distinction between at least two meanings of this widely misused term:

Fundamentalism originally referred to the belief that there are certain great truths in Christianity, which, if changed, would dissolve Christianity. Each Christian is allowed personal conviction in respect to a great number of doctrines and interpretations but that personal liberty is hedged about by key infallible and eternal doctrines. This is the term in its historic and good sense. The movement included such stalwarts as James Orr, J. Gresham Machen, Benjamin Warfield, W. H. Green and the numerous contributors to the famous Fundamentals papers.

In more recent years another movement has given the word an odious connotation. Along with much zeal, enthusiasm and conviction, yet lacking frequently in education or cultural breadth, and many times individualistic, took to the stump to defend the faith. Many times they were dogmatic beyond evidence, or were intractable of disposition, or were obnoxiously anti-cultural, anti-scientific and anti-educational. Hence the term came to mean one who was bigoted, an obscurantist, a fideist, a fighter and an anti-intellectual [Ramm 1955: 131.

The creationist position which this paper attempts to advance is to be identified with the first, and not the second meaning of "fundamentalist" as defined above. It is fully recognized, however, that all creationists who do not agree with this position are not automatically considered in the second category.

It is abundantly clear from his discussion of the matter (1954) that Ramm is employing the term "hyperorthodox" to refer to this second brand of fundamentalist so as not to perpetuate the "odious connotation" with the term. Ramm's reason for this is that we can sin to the right as well as to the left. Patriotism can degenerate into jingoism and enthusiasm into fanaticism and virtue into prudishness. It is possible not only to have slack theological views, but have views far more rigid and dogmatic than Scripture itself. Hyperorthodoxy in trying to be loyal to the Bible has developed an exaggerated sense of what loyalty to the Bible means [1954: 291.

He evidently got the term from J. W. Dawson, who, he points out (1954: 28), referred to "pedantic hyperorthodoxy" in evangelical apologetics in 1877.

Certain objections to my use of the term have been raised, however, chiefly upon the basis of a possible mss-identification of this position with sound, theological orthodoxy. Thus the alternatives "distorted orthodoxy" and "blind orthodoxy" have been suggested. Even more significant, perhaps, is the objection to the form of the term itself. Thus the Rev. John Buswell, my brother, wrote me, "Can anyone be hyperorthodox? Is not orthodoxy an ultimate-in one sphere anyway? In other words, many would regard 'hyper-orthodox' as they would 'hyper-straight' or 'hyper-sterilized.'"

Since these objections, and others, seem to have some value, I have chosen to use instead the term "hyper-traditionalist" suggested by my colleague, Professor Joseph Free. Although a bit more cumbersome, this term carries none of the theological associations invariably attached to "orthodoxy" and "fundamentalism", and seems in addition to refer a bit more precisely to those who being bound by tradition, prefer to retain the peripheral, relative, and changeable interpretations with the fundamental truths, without being able to distinguish the difference.
an anti-evolutionary position. It is this position which the modern evolutionist has tended to overlook, and which constitutes the alternative to organic evolution that I wish to set forth here.

The hyper-traditionalist position, however, is the most often heard, though seldom listened-to, expression of creationism. Thus it is not without reason that G. G. Simpson could dispense with a consideration of creationism in a public lecture in Philadelphia in 1950 with words to the effect that "creationists are found today only in non- or anti-scientific circles."

One of the chief drawbacks to the anti-evolutionists, from Darwin's early critics to the present day, familiar as some of their leaders are with the data, is that their activities and literature have been almost completely wrapped up in arguments over petty fragments of the record, assuming that to attack evolution as a total philosophy one must show the data upon which the assumptions are based to be untrue. Instead of offering a positive, non-evolutionary interpretation of the data themselves, they have been guilty of treating them with scorn and sarcasm for no other reason than that the evolutionist has done something with them first.

What results is that both parties claim to have truth on their side and at the same time charge the other with falsity and ignorance. The creationist attacks the evolutionist's total philosophy from the standpoint of revelation, while the evolutionist answers with scientific data. Since the evolutionist is seldom caught up in an argument over revelation, the creationist is inevitably drawn to argue on the evolutionist's own ground in terms of genetic processes or paleontological remains, where he is generally over his depth. This anti-evolutionary position has been characteristically negative and unscientific in spite of its strong adherence to the scriptural fundamentals of the historic Christian faith.

II

Now to a consideration of the non-evolutionary creationist position. There are three major areas to consider, each with its relevant body of evidences and various interpretations. They are:

  a. The origin of life.
  b. The origin and age of man.
  c. The processes of development since their origin.

The consideration of these areas is not simply a question of whether evolution" or "creation" is the exclusive explanation. Organic evolution is so inclusive and so complex a system that it must be broken down into its constituent elements. This may be attempted on various levels of abstraction. One of the most obvious and important steps which can
be taken is a separation of the consideration of origins from the consideration of process. I have the impression that British evolutionists are perhaps oftener involved in considerations of origins than are American evolutionists. The American, at least in anthropological circles, tends to leave questions of the origin of the earth and of life to the astronomers, physicists, and biologists on the one hand, or to the philosophers on the other. William Howells has stated the position thus:

We are totally bewildered, of course, about the beginnings of life and the reasons for our existence, and these are questions which have been grist to the mills of philosophers and myth-makers alike. But we know, roughly, what happened along the way, and that is the story of human evolution [1944:3].

Considerations of process, then, make up the major concerns of the evolutionist. Therefore let us postpone the consideration of origins to another context.

I find Simpson's three "modes" or aspects of evolution extremely useful for purposes of analysis, and comparison with the Creationist position. The first of these is speciation or "splitting" which, as Simpson points out, "is almost the only mode accessible for experimental biology, neozoology, and genetics. It embraces almost all the dynamic evolutionary phenomena subject to direct experimental attack." The second mode Simpson calls "phyletic" evolution, which "involves the sustained, directional (but not necessarily rectilinear) shift of the average characters of populations. It is not primarily the splitting up of a population, but the change of the population as a whole." While speciation may be called an explanation for races, species, and sometimes genera, Simpson points out that the phyletic mode "is typically related to middle taxonomic levels, usually genera, sub-families, and families." He also observes that "nine tenths of the pertinent data of paleontology fall into patterns of the phyletic mode" (1944: 202-203).

Thus, although evolution does not consist of wholly distinct processes, and a fossil series, for example, can exhibit speciation, or splitting, in a phyletic pattern through geological time, nevertheless the well documented data of natural selection on these levels—the genetic and geological processes—may be abstracted from the over-all theory of organic evolution. It is the position of the creationist, at this point, that he can accept all of the facts within these two areas of consideration. Thus the creationist need have no quarrel with the transmutation of species or other taxonomic categories, and may fully accept the genetic explanation for variation. Similarly he may accept the evidence of the "evolution" of the horse, and other such well documented paleontological series, upon the basis of the adaptive dynamic interaction of genetic and environmental change called natural selection.
Turning to more anthropological matters, the creationist accepts the evidence for the age of prehistoric man and his culture. He has no quarrel with an antiquity of hundreds of thousands of years; there is nothing in the Bible to indicate how long ago man was created. The date of 4004 B.C. which has been an item of ridicule by evolutionists and a rallying point for the hyper-traditionalist, now finds itself a cultural survival, firmly ensconced in the notes on page 1 of certain editions of the Bible, but without a valid function in either modern Christian theology or chronology.

Neither has the creationist any quarrel with morphological features of ancient man. The Bible, which is the creationist's basis of belief and life, simply says nothing about what Adam looked like. And, although the creationist, Protestant and Catholic alike, must of necessity hold to the belief (which will be further discussed below) that there was a "first man," it is of no consequence whether he looked like a pithecanthropoid or a Caucasoid. Furthermore, if anthropological opinion swings in favor of calling some prehistoric types by separate specific or generic names, and other types *Homo Sapiens* with modern man, this is of relatively little consequence. For the creationist recognizes the arbitrary and non-qualitative nature of taxonomic categories and is not bound to equate any one of them with the "kind" spoken of in Genesis 1.

Thus the creationist looks on with the same interest, or relief, as any anthropologist, when a classic Neanderthaloid posture is straightened up, or a Piltdown forgery exposed. Here, of course, is a characteristic difference from the hyper-traditionalist reaction. When the Piltdown news hit the press early in 1954 the anti-evolutionist and many religious journals were full of "I told you so's" and another major pillar of evolution had fallen! One creationist on the other hand simply expressed "relief that one of the more perplexing riddles of man's prehistory is finally solved." Presumably the same sort of reactions can be expected once Professor Strauss's re-analysis of the La Chapelle bones\(^3\) gains wider circulation.

III

So far we have discussed chiefly those areas of concurrence between the evolutionary and the creationist positions. With the consideration of Simpson's third mode, however, we introduce the area of disagreement between the two. Essentially it boils down to a matter of facts vs. theory, data vs. interpretation, or a matter of attitudes and pre-suppositions.

Despite the factual basis of speciation and phyletic evolution, there are what Simpson refers to as "major discontinuities of the record" existing in the paleontology of the larger taxonomic groups between which there

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3. William L. Strauss, Jr., presented before Section H of the 123rd annual meeting of the *AAAS* in New York, December, 1956.
is no fossil evidence of relationship. The origins of these larger groups are attributed to "a particular set of evolutionary events" that are "changes of adaptive zones such that transitional forms between the old zone and the new cannot, or at any rate do not, persist" (1953: 389). After showing in some detail how this applies to the perissodactyls, or horse group, Simpson concluded in 1944 that this regular absence of transitional forms is not confined to mammals, but is an almost universal phenomenon, as has long been noted by paleontologists. It is true of almost all orders of all classes of animals, both vertebrate and invertebrate. A fortiori, it is also true of the classes, themselves, and of the major animal phyla, and it is apparently also true of analogous categories of plants [1944: 107].

Now Simpson's third mode called "quantum" evolution purports to be the explanation for the jumping of these gaps. In his words, quantum evolution is "applied to the relatively rapid shift of a biotic population in disequilibrium, to an equilibrium distinctly unlike an ancestral condition. ... It is . . . believed to be the dominant and most essential process in the origin of taxonomic units of relatively high rank, such as families, orders, and classes. It is believed to include circumstances that explain the mystery that hovers over the origins of such major groups" (1944: 206).

Simpson candidly admits this as a "controversial and hypothetical" attempt to establish the existence of an "inferred phenomena." He points out that "major incidents of quantum evolution have systematically poor records, for reasons discussed [above]. Nevertheless, we do have many partial records of quantum evolution, even at high levels (e.g., origin of classes), which can be completed by sound and unequivocal inference."4

Of course, Simpson doesn't necessarily represent all evolutionists, but his three-fold breakdown is, de facto, applicable to organic evolution in its present-day form. Thus we conclude that it is at this point--quantum evolution--that the creationist and the evolutionist must part company. Again the question, "What is the alternative?" needs explicit definition. In other words, how will "creation" as an alternative to the quantum interpretation still fit the facts? As mentioned above, it becomes a matter of pre-supposition: for the creationist, supernaturalism; for the evolutionist, naturalism. I propose then that since in a percentage of orders, major gaps appear between them, perhaps the order is as near to being what Genesis 1 means by the term "kind" as any single taxonomic category can

4. 1953: 389. It should be added that Dr. Simpson points out as "the most important point about this mode of evolution and one of the reasons for its separate designation and special study" that "quantum evolution may lead to a new group at any taxonomic level. It is probable that species, either genetic or phyletic, often arise in this way. Certainly genera and all higher categories may do so. The phenomenon naturally becomes clearer and more readily definable when the change in adaptation and structure is relatively large, and such changes commonly eventuate in the development of higher categories. There is no level at which clear-cut quantum evolution is the only mode of origin of new groups, but at high levels some element of quantum evolution is usually involved" (Ibid.).
be. This proposal implies simply that God created the orders, and natural, selection took it from there. Of course this cannot be maintained consistently as far as orders are concerned, since in some cases classes or even phyla could be applied, and obviously in the case of man, a much lower category, perhaps genus, would apply. In other words, "an honest creationist will ask the paleontologist what he knows of the time of origin of animals, and draw his conclusions from the data" (Mixter 1953: 18).

Thus, if a supernatural presupposition is allowed, the interpretation may still remain consistent with the facts. One of the basic postulates of evolution, for example, is that similarity implies genetic relationship. However, with a supernatural agency pre-supposed, it becomes exactly as reasonable to postulate that similarity implies a common creator.

The fact that the evolutionary hypothesis as a total explanation for all major transitions is so firmly established in our scientific and educational system is due to at least three important factors. 1. Based upon the experimental knowledge of genetics, the sequential data of paleontology, and the logical consistency of the processes of adaptation and natural selection as presently conceived, this major jumping of gaps, in Simpson's words, "has a probable mechanism and would be expected under given conditions" (1944: 207). 2. The only alternative, creation, or the allowance of a supernaturalistic presupposition in the tradition of science, has been considered as clearly "incredible." 3. The creationists, due to their own peculiar tradition of fending off the advances of science, have failed to formulate this alternative in a scientifically respectable manner.

The primary point of difference, then, between evolutionism and creationism is not a matter of accepting or rejecting facts. There are no data as such that conflict with the Genesis account of creation as interpreted in the context of the author's language and culture. The primary point of difference is on the level of mechanistic vs. supernatural presuppositions. Most evolutionists claim with G. S. Carter, that "man is an animal, and

5. Mixter arrives at a similar conclusion suggesting that the order is at present a reasonable approximation of "kind". The obvious fact that "kind" cannot be equated consistently with any one taxonomic category is also explained as follows, "Because marsupials are separated by structural gaps unbridged by intermediate forms from other orders of mammals, a creationist may conclude that the first marsupials were specially created, if there are gaps between families or genera within the order of marsupials, he may believe that such families also had separately created beginnings. Whenever a gap is filled then a revision of the idea of what are the special creations should be made" (Mixter 1953: 17).

6. "Evolution itself is accepted by zoologists . . . because no alternative explanation is credible" (Watson 1929: 231). "The only alternative (to evolution) the doctrine of special creation which may be true but is irrational" (Morf 1925: 22). "... If Darwin's hypothesis be rejected, there is, it must be frankly admitted, no satisfactory alternative to take its place" (Scott 1917: 26). I am indebted to Dr. John R. Howitt, Superintendent, Ontario Hospital, Port Arthur Ontario, for these three quotations.
however greatly his present state differs from that of the rest of the animal kingdom, we must accept that he arose from sub-human ancestors by a process of evolution" (1953: 327). And, despite their acknowledgment that man is a wholly unique, or culture-bearing animal, most would tend to agree with Simpson that "man is the result of a purposeless and materialistic process that did not have him in mind. He was not planned. He is a state of matter, a form of life, a sort of animal, and a species of the Order Primates, akin nearly or remotely to all of life and indeed to all that is material" (1949: 344-45). The creationist claims that man is more than a unique animal, and that he was both planned and created by God.

In summary on these three modes of evolutionary process, the creationist may well hold, with Professor Mixter (1953: 10-11, 23), the following conclusions:

1. Speciation. "Whenever geneticists can show common genes, they are entitled to infer common ancestry."

2. Phyletic evolution. "When animals are traceable to other animals by a closely graded series of transitional forms, [the paleontologist is entitled to infer that] the early forms have given rise to the later ones."

3. Quantum evolution. "When a group of animals is separated from another group by an unbridged gap, then until bridges are found, one may hold that the groups so separated have arisen from independently created kinds."

IV

The questions may well be asked, how does this creationist position differ essentially from the Roman Catholic position, and, does the Catholic position also constitute an alternative to organic evolution?

The crux of the whole matter lies in the question of origins. The creationist, while he fully accepts the facts of genetics and the fossil record, believes that God created life and man, and that man did not arise from a previously existing organism. This position is frequently, but erroneously, called "theistic evolution," because it allows for some process in God's creative activity instead of necessitating an instantaneous creation. But while genetics and paleontology have played a big part in the expression of organic evolution, they neither alone nor in combination constitute evolution. One might as logically call the creationist a "theistic speciationist" or a believer in "theistic Mendelism" or "theistic stratigraphy" because he grants that God has instituted the hereditary process of genetics and the geological dynamics of prehistory or one might call a Bible-believing weather forecaster a "theistic meteorologist" simply because he believes that the laws which God instituted at creation, are believed and relied upon by non-Christian observers as well!
The theistic evolutionist, however, while believing that God is operating the process, also accepts the possibility that man could have arisen for a non-human creature, and that God merely endowed him with a soul, which act constituted the "creation of man," culturally, mentally, and spiritually. This position of theistic evolution is typically, but not exclusively, that of the Roman Catholics, who only specify their opposition to "materialistic" evolution. Dr. J. F. Ewing, in a recent issue of the Catholic Anthropological Quarterly, summarizing "The Present Catholic Attitude Towards Evolution" admits that "God may indeed have used a body prepared for the soul as far as possible by evolution. . . ."; that "there is no defined doctrine which opposes a theory of the evolution of Man's body, ... " and that "the possibility that there were true men before Adam and Eve, men whose line became extinct (in other words, Pre-Adamites), is allowable."

This I find, at present, impossible to accept, on theological as well as on anthropological grounds. Theologically, the fundamental doctrines of the original perfection and subsequent fall of man and his consequent need of redemption; and the role of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Son of God in dying on the cross to pay the penalty for the fall, for all who will accept Him, are seriously jeopardized by a first man having descended organically from pre-human parents. Now theistic evolutionists likewise acknowledge the necessity of retaining this doctrine of original sin. It is inextricably tied up with the necessity of having all mankind arise from one man. The Catholic statement on this from the Encyclical "Humani Generis" quoted by Ewing, is as follows:

No Catholic can hold that after Adam there existed on this earth true men who did not take their origin through natural generation from him as from the first parent of all, or that Adam is merely a symbol for a number of first parents. For it is unintelligible how such an opinion can be squared with what the sources of revealed truth and the documents of the Magisterium of the Church teach on original sin, which proceeds from sin actually committed by an individual Adam, and which, passed on to all by way of generation, is in everyone as his own [Cotter 1951: 43].

Thus the theistic evolutionist, if he allows man to have arisen from a non-human form, is obliged to inject some creative action or other upon his physical body in addition to giving him a soul, in order to make that body perfect and not subject to death. To me this is simply an additional and unnecessary complication of hypotheses to which Occam's razor could well apply.7

Anthropologically, the theistic evolutionary explanation for the origin of man seems to run counter to what we have become accustomed to expect of the cultural assemblages in association with fossil man. The pre-adamic theory would seem to imply that there were beings morphologically

7. Essentia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.
human, but *without culture*. The evidence of human paleontology seems to argue otherwise. Of course we are at once faced with the question, What is morphologically human? I believe that the question of "human or non-human?" cannot be answered categorically upon morphological grounds. The question must be answered on spiritual grounds, which I presume are only indicated by cultural remains.

The problem of the interpretation of the Australopithecines immediately arises. So far no definite indication of any cultural assemblage has been identified. I readily accept the facts of the unique Australopithecine morphology, the marked humanoid conformation of the dentition, the ilium, and other features indicative of an upright posture. Nevertheless, until such time as the chronological problem of Australopithecine's antiquity in relation to true hominids is resolved, and some identifiable cultural assemblage is discovered, I prefer to class them as "non-human" in every sense of the word. I consider Mayr's designation of Homo transvaalensis premature, and cannot yet see Robinson's inclusion of Meganthropus in the same genus as Paranthropus without more of the former to go on. But, as I have attempted to point out to my hyper-traditionalist friends, should such a cultural assemblage be identified for the Australopithecines, it will necessitate perhaps a drastic revision of what we are used to considering "human" but nothing more as far as the creationist position is concerned.

By way of summarizing similarities and differences between the Roman Catholic view of evolution and the creationist view: (a) The following points we hold in common (adapted from Ewing 1956: 124)

1. The body of data and the processes of speciation and the paleontological record are accepted without reservation.
2. "We know of Adam and Eve only from revelation, and a belief in an original pair is not in conflict with any real scientific evidence."

8. During the discussion period at the graduate seminar of the Anthropology Department, University of Chicago, February 18, 1957, Dr. F. Clark Howell revealed that according to communications from C. K. Brain in South Africa there had been some 50 Quartzite pebble tools discovered within the past year in the Australopithecus-bearing deposits at Sterkfontein which Mr. Brain was currently investigating.

Dr. Braidwood then offered the thought-provoking suggestion that as far as he was concerned, the Australopithecines could be a perfectly good tool-making species, yet without necessarily possessing a "cultural assemblage" as normally considered with all of its ramifications. Perhaps the Australopithecines will precipitate a re-definition of "culture" as well as of "human".

9. One anti-evolutionary journal (*The High Way*, XXVI [Oct.-Dec., 1956], 20-39) devoted some twenty pages to criticising my inclusion of the Australopithecidae in an article on fossil man. According to the typical hyper-traditionalist views expressed in this as well as other like periodicals, my position is that of a "compromiser" who is "currying the favor of infidel scientists." I am an "intellectual snob" who is blind to the fact that evolutionists are engaged in a monstrous conspiracy to undermine and overthrow the teachings of the Bible!
3. "All men (and hence the first man) are endowed by God with spiritual souls."

4. The first man was constituted a human being "by the direct and immediate action of God, an action that affected both soul and body."

(b) The differences lie in the question of origins which may be summarized, as follows

1. The evolutionary origin of the major taxonomic groups, or of paleontological series between which there is only inferential evidence of connection, sometimes referred to as "quantum" or "macro-" evolution, is accepted implicitly by the Catholic theologian, but is rejected by the creationist.

2. The evolutionary origin of man from some pre-human form is allowed by the Catholic theologian but is rejected by the creationist.

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For a long time, evolution has been opposed by a hyper-traditionalist brand of creationism characterized by a negative, anti-evolutionary approach. Consequently evolutionists have erroneously considered creationists as inevitably of this brand, and have tended to overlook the position of a scientifically-minded creationism which has attempted to be non-evolutionary in its thinking rather than purely anti-evolutionary. This is not surprising however, since these creationists have tended to be less vocal and perhaps a bit more cautious in the expression of their views.

The Roman Catholic theologian has always represented a basically creationist position, but has, with many Protestant scholars, accepted more of evolutionary theory than the facts seem to demand. Thus, with theistic presuppositions demanded, this position is termed by many "theistic evolution."

Thus we are left with three major groups based upon supernaturalistic premises, the hyper-traditionalist, the scientific creationist, and the theistic evolutionist.

In restating our question, Is there an alternative to organic evolution? it would seem that the answer is "yes" regarding origins; "no" regarding processes; and. that in comparison with organic evolution, creationism is the alternative, theistic evolution merely a variant.

10. This does not mean that they are any the less aware of the dangerous implications of evolution which run counter to a biblical position. It does mean that they desire to concern themselves with more than mere denunciations of these. They attempt rather to formulate a positive, non-evolutionary interpretation of the facts which is consistent, both scientifically and theologically.
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Enoch, a Man Who Walked with God

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The account of Enoch, the seventh from Adam, is placed in the third section of Genesis and is announced by the major structural word of the book תולדות, generally expressed as "these are the generations of. . . ." However, as Woudstra has demonstrated, the תולדות structure announces the historical development from the ancestor mentioned and should be understood as, "this is what became of (person's name)," or "this is what happened to the line of (person's name)." Genesis 5:1 would then read, "This is the book of what became of the family tree of Adam."

What did become of Adam's family tree? Whatever happened to the human race? Did God's promise of death (2:16-17) come true? Whatever became of the curse (3:19)? Would man, due to his rebellion, die after all? Before 5:1 no one had died (though Abel was murdered by his brother and Lamech killed a man for wounding him and a boy for striking him, 4:23).

The theme of chapter 5 is the end of life. "No reader of Genesis 5 . . . fails to be impressed by the recurrent phrase 'And he died,' which baldly and emphatically concludes the entry for each of these antediluvians. The whole movement of the regular form of these notices is toward death." In other words the answer to the

1 The first section is 1:1-2:3 and the second is 2:4-4:26.
questions, Whatever happened to Adam's family tree? or Whatever happened to the human race? is that they all died. Did God's promise of death ("in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die," 2:17) ever come true? Yes, Adam's line died successively. Whatever became of the curse? "The answer is that, in spite of human achievements (the achievements of chapter 4), the curse of death reigned as king from Adam's time on through the generations."4

The account of Enoch, then, the one who walked with God, is placed in the midst of the reign of death. This theme of death harmonizes well with the author's overall theme in Genesis 1-11, the spread of sin and the spread of grace.5 "Thus Genesis chapter 5 describes something like a transitional period, during which death caused by sin only slowly broke the powerful physical resistance of primitive human nature."6 In other words in spite of human progress, civilization, and prosperity, in spite of mankind's aspirations, he died.7 So the setting of Enoch's walk with God is the spread of sin, ending with death.

The two chief components of narrative are characters (people) and events.8 Events make up the plot, and the characters are the actors who carry out the plot. The plot of Genesis 5, a plot whose structure is carried along with the monotonous phrase "and he died" (repeated eight times) and whose actors are Adam's family tree (10 men), is a masterful backdrop against which is recorded this remarkable sentence, "Enoch walked with God." In a plot where a funeral bell continually tolls out its mournful drone there is a disjunctive ray of hope, another example of the spread-of-sin, spread-of-grace theme. The plot unfolds in the following way.

The prologue (5:1-2) of this "Genealogy of Death" recalls the creation of Adam. Moses wrote that man, created male and female, made in God's likeness, was blessed by God and named "Man" (this naming here mentioned for the first time in Genesis). Adam also became the father of a son in his own likeness (mentioned for the first time in Genesis), a son made according to Adam's image, a son whom Adam named Seth (v. 3).

5 Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, pp. 64-73.
The effect of the prologue, as Sailhamer points out, is to cast God in the role of a father. He made a son in His own likeness. He named His son. He blessed His son. He is like the Genesis patriarchs who also did the same for their children. This same pattern is duplicated by Adam. One important point emerges in the genealogical list in chapter 5: God is shown to be the Father of all mankind.

The plot continues with a lengthy genealogical list (vv. 3-32) and concludes in 9:28-29 (with the account of the Flood spliced into the record of man from Adam to Noah). The list in Genesis 5 follows this pattern:

Component 1: Person A lived X years and then became the father of B.

Component 2: Person A lived Y years after he fathered B, fathering other sons and daughters.

Component 3: Person A's entire life lasted X and Y years; then he died.

The same pattern is followed again in 11:10-26, beginning with Shem (Noah's son). However, in the record of Enoch, the third component is missing. No mention is made of death. But with the other patriarchs in chapter 5 death is emphasized. Why, for instance, add "and he died" when that fact is understood? If a person's entire life consists of X number of years, it is assumed (logically) that he died. Yet the writer underscores each man's death by repeating the words "and he died." The purpose is to highlight by contrast the account of Enoch. Enoch, seventh in the line from Adam, breaks the structural pattern—he did not live (Component 1), he walked with God; he did not die (Component 3), he walked with God and God took him. The reversal is stark and bursting with theological truth. Obviously the author crafted the genealogy in this way to make it a theological commentary. Theological truth about life and death (under the curse) is being taught by means of this recurring literary pattern and the subsequent break from it. The pattern expresses the author's value system.

The prologue (vv. 1-2) followed by the monotonous genealogical list of death (vv. 3-32) juxtaposes two opposing themes. The sons and daughters of God the Creator, children made in His own likeness, children designed to be blessed, as a father blesses the children he loves and cares for, fall prey instead to a curse. Those who were once

10 Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 120.
blessed are now cursed. Those made in His likeness, those made to live are now destined to die, returning to dust, thereby also falling prey to the serpent who will eat dust (3:14). All the children of God the Father die.

The spread-of-sin motif is evident. But where is the accompanying spread-of-grace motif? Where is the sense of hope in the midst of all this death?

**The Account of Enoch, Seventh from Adam**

The account of Enoch (5:21-24) marks an exception to the pattern in Genesis 5. In contrast to the smooth, repetitious sequence of the rest of the genealogy, there is an abrupt disjuncture at 5:22. Instead of "And Enoch lived" (which would be the regular pattern up to this point), Moses wrote, "Enoch walked with God three hundred years." Also in verse 24 the author dropped the regular phrase "and he died," replacing it with, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."

The effect of this abrupt change at verses 22 and 24 is to place Enoch's life outside the regular sequence of the chapter. "A study of the author's style in Genesis shows that when he wants to begin a specific topic much narrower than the preceding subject matter, he uses such a technique of disjuncture."\(^{12}\) The change in structure reveals an exception to the accounts of the others. In contrast to the formulae of the others, who lived and died, Enoch walked with God. He did not simply "live"; he walked with God. This suggests that walking with God was a step above mere living.\(^{13}\) Furthermore Enoch did not die; he walked with God (stated for the second time), and God took him.

The *hithpael* stem of the verb $\text{יָלָה}^\text{A}$ (waw plus Hithpael pret-erite) recalls the Lord God walking in the garden (Hithpael participle, 3:8)\(^{14}\) and in some way corresponds to it.\(^{15}\) Whenever the author of Genesis (and of the Pentateuch) used the Hithpael stem of $\text{יָלָה}^\text{A}$, one of the subjects of the narratives is God. (The only exception is Exodus 21:19.) Like Enoch, Noah also walked with God (Gen. 6:9). When Abram arrived in the land, the author picked up the thought

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13 Ross, Creation and Blessing, p. 175.
of walking once again: "Arise, walk about the land" (13:17); "Walk before Me" (17:1; cf. 24:40; 48:15). Walking with God involves the idea of continuity or habitual manner of life, and all these examples employ the Hithpael stem (cf. Deut. 23:14).

The mention of the longevity of Enoch's walk-300 years—adds to the force of the verb. So the expression "walked with God" was the author's summary of Enoch's life. Bullinger notes that "walk" is "used of one's continued course of action and life: i.e., the habitual habit and manner of life." Today one might say that walking with God was Enoch's lifestyle.

Why did Moses state twice that Enoch walked with God? Why underline the death of the preceding and succeeding patriarchs? Sailhamer cogently answers these questions:

Why does the author want to point to Enoch so specifically as an exception? It is not merely because he did not die. That in itself is reason enough to merit special attention, but it does not sufficiently explain the purpose of the author in this case. The author's purpose can be better seen in the way he has emphasized, through repetition, that Enoch "walked with God" (vv. 22, 24). The phrase "walked with God"... clearly means something to the author, for he uses the same expression to describe Noah as "a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time" (6:9), and Abraham and Isaac as faithful servants of God (17:1; 24:40; 48:15). Its use here shows that the author views it as the reason why Enoch did not die. Enoch is pictured as one who did not suffer the fate of Adam ("you will die") because, unlike the others, he "walked with God."17

Here then is a glimpse of grace in the midst of the spread of sin (death being a result of sin). Here the funeral bell stops tolling. One man walked with God and God took him.18 He escaped the clutches of death. Clearly the pathway to life, the road one is to travel to escape the sting of death, is the one of the pilgrim, in which a person walks with God.

At this point Moses did not explain what it means to walk with God. He cited no method or formula. Though he held Enoch up as a model for others to follow, he communicated no descriptive explanation of this "walk." Moses held that explanation until later in the narrative. He uncovered an inherent relationship between the past and the future, using the lives of God's people. "That which hap-

17 Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 74.
18 The same terminology, "God took him," is used of Elijah's transport to glory in which he escaped death (2 Kings 2:1, 5, 9-10).
pened to God's people in the past portends events that still lie in the future. Or, to say it another way, the past is seen as a lesson of the future. Enoch's walk, then, though yet unexplained theologically, is a lesson the author will present at a later time, a lesson (from the past) designed to be learned by future generations of God's people, for they too will live under the curse.

Walking with God, then, incorporates several theological ideas. First, the one who walks with God is a creature made in God's likeness and linked to the Creator in a Father-son relationship. Second, walking with God occurred during the reign of death, thereby making the walk an exception to the normal pattern of living and dying. Thus simply living and dying is portrayed as below the norm in quality. And conversely, walking with God is a step above mere living. It is the way to overcome the curse. Third, the walk is descriptive of a lifestyle, a pattern of life with continuity and duration. Fourth, this walk or way of life is designed to be a lesson for God's people in the future.

In writing of Enoch's life Moses' aim was to communicate hope. Death is not the final answer; for Enoch God overruled death. The black cloud of death, hovering over the human race, a cloud promised by God Himself, a dark cloud expressing the essence of the curse, is split wide open with the brilliant rays of Enoch's life. There is rescue from death. There is rescue from the effects of the curse. There is hope. There is a road back into the garden; there is a method of bypassing the guardian cherubim and flaming sword—there is access to the tree of life. One can indeed live forever. It is possible after all once again to fellowship with and worship the Lord God in the garden. How? By walking with God; thus the lesson of Enoch (placed in the genealogy of death) is this: Life comes through walking with God.

A Pastoral Response

Israelites approaching Canaan needed the lesson of Enoch's life. Etched in their own history was the tragic account of an entire generation lost (to death) in the wilderness (cf. the Book of Numbers; 1 Cor. 10:1-13), a generation that overlooked or ignored the lesson that life with God (eternal life) comes by walking with God.

Enoch's life is also a model for the people of God's New Covenant to follow in their earthly pilgrimage. The finality of

20 Ross, Creation and Blessing, p. 174.
death caused by sin, and so powerfully demonstrated in the genealogy of Genesis, is in fact not so final. Man was not born to die; he was born to live and that life comes by walking with God. The tentacles of the curse, reaching over the entire scope of Genesis 1-11 (except for 1:1-2:3) and causing unrelieved gloom\(^{21}\) are thwarted at the seventh from Adam. Walking with God is the key to the chains of the curse. Furthermore walking with God is a step above mere living; it is also the answer to man's deepest need and greatest fear (death).


**WALKING WITH GOD INVOLVES FAITH IN HIM**

The writer of Hebrews bolstered the hearts of his readers by communicating the concept that faith is the key to perseverance in the furnace of suffering (Heb. 10:32-39). After giving a brief definition of faith (11:1), he cited an impressive list of people who gained God's approval (v. 2) and won spiritual victories by means of faith. Faith enables believers to understand creation (v. 3, referring to Gen. 1-2). Abel gained a righteous standing with God by means of faith (Heb. 11:4, referring to Gen. 4). And next is Enoch, who by faith "was taken up so that he should not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God" (Heb. 11:5). The next verse (tucked between references to Enoch and Noah, both of whom are said in Genesis to have walked with God) is critically placed and theologically significant: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (v. 6).

Hebrews 11:5-6 is a divinely inspired commentary on Genesis 5:22-24. The analysis of Enoch's walk with God focuses on his faith in God. Faith then was the theological description of his walk and the instrumental cause of his pleasing God. Two features of Enoch's faith are stressed: his faith in the reality of God ("for he who comes to God must believe that He is," v. 6), and his faith in the responsiveness of God ("and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him," v. 6). Walking with God requires faith in Him, faith in the reality of His existence, and faith in the reality of His responsiveness (to one's faith). Walking with God inspires believers to look to God's future rewards based on their present faith and life.

The writer of Hebrews did not say that Enoch thought about God or speculated about Him. He did not read about God or talk about God and thereby gain His favor. Rather, Enoch believed God and thereby pleased God.

\(^{21}\) Clines, *The Theme of the Pentateuch*, p. 66.
It seems then that the intent of the author of Genesis (using Enoch's life) was to anticipate the account of Abraham, the man of faith, the paragon of righteousness, the one who displayed faithful obedience to the will of God. He is the author's profound illustration of the meaning of faith. So Enoch was used to prepare the reader by encouraging him to ask, What does it mean to walk with God?

WALKING WITH GOD PLEASES HIM

In Genesis 5 the Septuagint translates the words "Enoch walked with God" as "Enoch pleased God." The same is true of Noah. The Hebrew reads, "Noah walked with God," but the Septuagint has, "Noah pleased God" (6:9). The account of Abraham has the same interpretation in the Septuagint (17:1; 24:40; 48:15). Bruce suggests these changes were made "from a desire, no doubt, to make the language less anthropomorphical." The writer of Hebrews (with the Septuagint as his foundation) went along with this interpretation of "walking with God" as "pleasing God" (linked inextricably to the concept of faith as the instrumental cause of pleasing Him). This suggests an important lesson from Enoch's life: walking with God involves living by faith and brings God's favor. He is pleased with believers when they believe Him, when they live by faith. "To please the Lord and to walk with Him are inseparable factors."23

WALKING WITH GOD IS NOT LEGALISTIC ADHERENCE TO THE LAW

A profound lesson in regard to legalism and faith can be mined from the account of Enoch. Sailhamer speaks to this point.

It is important to see that for the author of the Pentateuch "walking with God" could not have meant a mere "keeping" of a set of laws. Rather it is just with those men who could not have had a set of "laws" that the author associates the theme of "walking with God." By choosing such men to exemplify "walking with God," the author shows his desire to teach a better way to live than merely a legalistic adherence to the law. . . . For him the way to life was exemplified best in men like Enoch ("Enoch walked with God," 5:22), Noah ("he walked with God," 6:9), and Abraham ("Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness," 15:6). It is to these Patriarchs who lived long before the giving of the law at Sinai that the author of Genesis turns for a model of faith and trust in God.24

In pastoral ministry the message of living each day by faith—regardless of the circumstances—must continually be communicated to God's people. Faith is the modus operandi of both salvation and

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24 Sailhamer, Genesis, p. 74.
sanctification and therefore it must become the flour (the essential ingredient) in all the meals prepared for and served to God's flock. If faith is the steam in the boiler which moves the locomotive down the track, then Christian leaders must continually and faithfully stoke the fires of faith in the hearts of their people.

Worship services should be designed to contribute to that faith-building process. Hymns and Bible expositions must certainly feed the faith of the sheep. Meetings for intercessory prayer should also help build faith in the One to whom believers pray. Rather than allow people to leave prayer meetings with despairing hearts—seeing the size of the difficulties and the nature of the problems—it behooves leaders to focus their people's hearts on the name of the Lord ("May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high... and in the name of our God we will set up our banners... we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God," Ps. 20:1, 5, 7). To focus on the name of the Lord (the sum total of His attributes) helps build people's confidence and trust in Him (cf. Matt. 21:18-22).

Pastors and other Christian leaders are to build people's faith in the Triune God of Scripture. To build people's faith is to help them walk with God. To help them walk with God brings God's favor. He is pleased with them. And by nurturing their walk of faith, their pilgrimage of trust, they will walk right into eternity to continue that unabated walk with God-forever. Spurgeon's comments on Enoch are appropriate here:

What a splendid walk! A walk of three hundred years! One might desire a change of company if he walked with anybody else, but to walk with God for three centuries was so sweet that the patriarch kept on with his walk until he walked beyond time and space, and walked into paradise, where he is still marching on in the same divine society. He had heaven on earth, and it was therefore not so [unusual] that he glided away from earth to heaven so easily. 25

WALKING WITH GOD OVERCOMES DEATH AND BRINGS LIFE

The reason God overruled death for Enoch was that he walked with God. Walking with God is the way to life, the way to victory over the curse for today and tomorrow. Enoch's life depicts the fact that the reign of death will come to an end and the faithful will reign in life through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:12-21).

Conclusion

Walking with God involves having faith in Him, and that faith pleases God. And, walking with God is the way to eternal

life, the way back into the presence of God, to worship Him and enjoy fellowship with Him forever.

Dods's commentary on Enoch's walk with God provides a fitting conclusion to this discussion.

"Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him." The phrase is full of meaning. Enoch walked with God because he was His friend and liked His company, because he was going in the same direction as God, and had no desire for anything but what lay in God's path. We walk with God when He is in all our thoughts; not because we consciously think of Him at all times, but because He is naturally suggested to us by all we think of; as when any person or plan or idea has become important to us, no matter what we think of, our thought is always found recurring to this favourite object, so with the godly man everything has a connection with God and must be ruled by that connection. When some change in his circumstances is thought of, he has first of all to determine how the proposed change will affect his connection with God—will his conscience be equally clear, will he be able to live on the same friendly terms with God, and so forth. When he falls into sin he cannot rest till he has resumed his place at God's side and walks with Him again. This is the general nature of walking with God; it is a persistent endeavour to hold all our life open to God's inspection and in conformity to His will; a readiness to give up what we find does cause any misunderstanding between us and God; a feeling of loneliness if we have not some satisfaction in our efforts at holding fellowship with God, a cold and desolate feeling when we are conscious of doing something that displeases Him. This walking with God necessarily tells on the whole life and character. As you instinctively avoid subjects which you know will jar upon the feelings of your friend, as you naturally endeavour to suit yourself to your company, so when the consciousness of God's presence begins to have some weight with you, you are found instinctively endeavouring to please Him, repressing the thoughts you know He disapproves, and endeavouring to educate such dispositions as reflect His own nature.26

To walk with God is to open to Him all one's purposes and hopes, to seek His judgment on one's scheme of life and idea of happiness, to be on thoroughly friendly terms with God.


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SHORT STUDY

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
AND THE INTERPRETATION OF GEN 2:4-7

JACK COLLINS

I. Introduction

The interpretation of Gen 2:4-7 is a traditional hard place for Biblical studies. These verses are often cited as proof of discord between the creation narratives of Genesis 1 and 2, and hence as evidence of disparate sources of the originals. In response, many have sought to harmonize the two pericopes, but with widely differing conclusions. The purpose of this essay is to employ the tools of discourse grammar to see if they can shed light on this passage.

We begin by giving the Hebrew of Gen 2:4-8, with the RSV for a sample English version. Our grammatical discussion will lead to an interpretation that we can express by modifying the RSV

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, (5) when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up--for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; (6) but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground--(7) then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. (8) And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. (RSV)

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common analysis of the clause-to-clause relationships. Further, the interpretation of the Hebrew ‘ères as "earth" in verses 5-6 is also common. Indeed, it is this that leads to the declaration of contradiction between these verses and the events of Genesis 1. S. R. Driver is typical:

The words [of verses 4b-5], taken in connexion with the sequel (v. 7), are intended to describe the condition of the earth at the time when man was created: no shrub or herb--and a fortiori, no tree--had yet appeared upon it, for it was not sufficiently watered to support vegetation. According to i. 11f., plant- and tree-life was complete three ‘days’ before the creation of man: obviously the present writer views the order of events differently.

Those who oppose source criticism but still accept this clause-to-clause analysis typically contend that the two pericopes are better seen as complementary rather than contradictory; and any successful harmonization between the two pericopes diminishes the credibility of conventional source analysis.

A recent example of such a complementary interpretation comes from Mark Futato. He says,

I understand Gen 2:5 as having a global reference that would parallel the situation prior to Days 3b [Gen 1:11-12] and 6b [Gen 1:26-30], i.e., before God created vegetation and people.... Rather than being a second creation account, Gen 2:4-25 is properly read as a resumption and expansion not of Day 6 but of Days 3b and 6b taken together as a unit.

He uses this to support the conclusion that strict chronological sequence is not a part of the communicative intent of either Genesis 1 or 2, and hence to support the so-called "framework" interpretation of the Genesis days.

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1 The RSV as it stands is non-committal on whether verse 4a goes with 1:1-2:3 as its conclusion, or with 2:4b-25 as its heading. My discussion will address that question later.


3 Richard Hess, "Genesis 1-2 in its literary context," TynB 41:1 (1990), 143-53, gives a rationale for this approach without discussing the particulars of Genesis 2:4-7. As he observes, it is a feature of Genesis first to give the overall picture, and then to go back and focus on some details. Derek Kidner, "Genesis 2:5, 6: Wet or Dry?" TynB 17 (1966) 109-14, attempts to harmonize the two passages by taking 2:5-6 as describing the same conditions as 1:2, "the unrelieved expanse of waters" (112).

4 Mark Futato, "Because it had rained: A study of Gen 2:5-7 with implications for Gen 2:4-25 and Gen 1:1-2:3," WTJ 60 (1998), 1-21. Although the analysis and conclusions of the present paper originated independently of Futato's work, they have profited greatly from that work.

5 Futato, "Because it had rained," 12 n.41 and 14.
In my judgment Futato is probably right in supposing that, under this analysis of Gen 2:4-8, the only way to avoid the declaration of incoherence between the two pericopes is to do away with sequentiality. But this can lead us to question whether the analysis is itself right. I am more interested in raising this question, because my own exegesis has convinced me of a view of the Genesis days as "analogical days," namely they are God's work days: they are analogous, and not identical, to ours, structured for the purpose of setting a pattern for the human rhythm of work and rest. According to this interpretation, the days are "broadly consecutive" (allowing for the possibility that parts of the days may overlap, or that there may be logical rather than chronological criteria for grouping some events in a particular day).6

II. Discourse Considerations and Literary Structure for Gen 2:4-25

Discourse analysis is the discipline that studies texts as acts of communication. Discourse grammar analyzes grammatical structures, such as verb tense and aspect, to find patterns of usage related to communicative intent. Described this way, its advantages for exegesis should be obvious and not particularly controversial. Unfortunately, discourse grammarians often use exotic vocabulary and make extravagant claims, and generally do not make clear to the uninitiated just which parts of their position are common ground among Hebrew grammarians, and which are not.7 I aim to make use of those parts which are in fact common ground.

Our first task is to identify the genre of our text: is it narrative, exposition, exhortation, eulogistic poetry, lament, or something else? There is no difficulty in discerning that in this passage we are dealing with narrative prose. Next we must delineate the boundaries and structures of the individual pericopes. In this case, we must decide whether we should in fact divide verse 4; and then whether any of its parts belong to the first pericope (1:1-2:3) or to the second (2:5-25).

Many have noticed that in Gen 2:4 we have an elaborate chiasmus.8 In general, the communicative function of a chiasmus is to unify its parts, with

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7 In this light it is understandable that Bruce Waltke and Michael O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 55, "have resisted the strong claims of the discourse grammarians"; but it is nonetheless an unfortunate decision on their part. After all, the goal of discourse grammar is not to replace the traditional grammar (which seems to be Waltke and O'Connor's perception), but to incorporate that grammar into a systematic description of what good readers in the receptor audience do when they receive a text.

8 E.g., Yehudah Kiel, Sefer Biresit (Genesis, Da’at Miqra; Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1997), 43 (Hebrew page numbers); C. John Collins, "The wayyiqtol as ‘pluperfect’: When and
the context allowing us to infer just what kind of unity the author has in view.9 The chiasmus here can be seen thus: a heavens ... b earth ... c when they were created c' in the day that the Lord God made b' earth and a' heavens. As I observed in an earlier paper,

Such an elaborate chiasmus is evidence of art, not coincidence. Further, by this means the author has tied the two accounts together: note how the word order "the heavens and the earth" (a and b), as well as the verb bara "create" (c), point us back to 1:1 (as well as 1:21, 27 for the verb); whereas the change in divine name from 'elohim, "God" (ch. 1) to yhwh elohim, "the Lord God" (ch. 2-3) is reflected in the c' element. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the final editor wanted his readers to read the two accounts as complementary, not contradictory.10

This further shows why the change in divine name from 4a to 4b does not of itself indicate that the two parts are separable:11 instead, as Franz Delitzsch put it, "The combination of the two names denotes ... the oneness of God the Creator ['elohim, 1:1-2:4a] and the God of Israel, or the God of positive revelation [yhwh, 2:4b-3:24]."12

Therefore the features of the text invite us to read verse 4 as a unit, and to start a new sentence at the beginning of verse 5. However, is it a postscript to the first pericope,13 or a heading to the second? The simplest answer is that it introduces what follows: that is the function of the toledot "generations" phrases throughout Genesis (cf. 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2),14 but so long as the communicative function is observed (i.e., as an invitation to read the two narratives as complements) it does not matter much.15

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10 Collins, "Wayyiqtol as pluperfect," 139.
11 Stephen Kempf, "Introducing the Garden of Eden: The structure and function of Genesis 2:4b-7," JOTT 7:4 (1996) 33-53, acknowledges the chiasmus but supports the division of the verse on the basis of, among other things, the change in divine name (at 39-41).
14 Cf. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 49; Delitzsch, Genesis, 110. This agrees with the paragraph marker of the Masoretic text.
15 As Cassuto noted, Genesis, I: 99. Hence the suggestion that the difference in conclusion between Niccacci and myself on this point is evidence of "the subjective nature of Discourse Analysis" is a drastic overstatement (Joseph Pipa, Jr., "From chaos to cosmos: A critique of the non-literal interpretations of Genesis 1: 1-2:3," in Did God Create in Six Days?, 153-98, at 179;
Next we must assess the structure of the whole pericope. Here is where
the discourse grammar of the verb can help us. In a Biblical Hebrew narra-
tive, the function of the *wayyiqtol* verb form (also improperly called "the
waw-consecutive with imperfect") is as "the backbone or storyline tense of
Biblical Hebrew narrative discourse." Hence, if we want to find the main
sequence of events in a narrator's presentation, we should begin by looking
for the *wayyiqtol* verbs. Other verb forms are used for supplying background
information: e.g., the "perfect" (*qatal*) is used to denote events off the storyline,
while the "imperfect" (*vqatal*), "converted perfect" (*weqatal*), and participle (*qotel*)
denote background activities with process aspect ("something was happening").

From this we can see that the storyline begins in verse 7 with the first
*wayyiqtol* verb (*wayyiser*, "and he formed"). Verses 5-6 are syntactically
background, or setting, for verse 7: with verbs describing what had "not
yet" happened in verse 5, and then verbs with process aspect in verse 6
(*ya'aleh*, RSV "went up," better "was going up"; *wehisqa*, RSV "watered," better "was watering")
describing what was happening when the action of
verse 7 took place. This yields a structure as follows:

2:4  Hinge/heading
2:5-6  Background/setting--specific circumstances for following events
2:7-9  Events: formation of man, planting of garden, placing of man
2:10-14  Excursus: the four primeval rivers

cf. Benjamin Shaw, "The literal day interpretation," in the same volume, 199-220, at 200 n.3).
The difference is simply one of literary judgment, and does not impinge on the validity of the
methodology (especially since Niccacci does not interact with the alternative).

16 R. E. Longacre, "Discourse perspective on the Hebrew verb: Affirmation and restatement,"
in Walter Bodine, ed., *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns,

17 Of course, since this verb form can be used for imbedded storylines, we cannot mechan-
ically identify the occurrence of the verb form with this function.

18 "Process aspect" has a number of contextually inferred nuances, such as habitual action,
repeated action, one action in process, inceptive action.

19 This analysis agrees with Niccacci, "Analysis of Biblical narrative," 187; cf. Wenham,
*Genesis 1-15*, 46 n.5a. Futato, "Because it had rained," 2 n.5 and 5-6, argues that verse 7 is part
of the background with verses 5-6. However, this is unsatisfactory because (1) the *wayyiqtol*
sequence begins in verse 7 and runs through verse 9; and (2) it gives no indication of how the
discontinuity between verses 7 and 8 is detectable. He depends, not so much on the gram-
matical particulars as on his assessment of this section as having a "problem-resolution"
structure, as well as on his interest in supporting a version of the "framework" view of 1:1-2:3.
But if neither of those has independent support, his case loses its force.

20 The verb forms are participles, an imperfect (verse 10 *yipparad*, RSV "it divided"), and
a converted perfect (verse 10 *wehaya*, RSV "and became"), which have the function of giving
process aspect background with past time reference. That is, these four rivers were flowing etc.,
though they might not flow the same way now (cf. John Munday, Jr., "Eden's geography
verse 15 begins by re-stating the action of verse 8 (verse 8 "there he put the man" . . . verse
15 "the Lord God took the man and set him"): it resumes the narrative after a digression. This
2:15-17 Events: God establishes terms of relationship with man
2:18-25 Events: formation of complementary helper
Peak: verses 23-24

III. Harmonizing with Gen 1:1-2:3

Since Gen 2:7 recounts the formation of the first human (cf. verse 6 which says there was not a human up to this point), we cooperate with the author by taking it as complementary to 1:27. In doing so we note that the formation of the woman, which is given in the same verse in the broad stroke account of chapter 1, is in chapter 2 separated from the making of the man by several events. The making of the woman is preceded by a declaration of "not good" in 2:18, indicating that at that point we have not yet come to the "very good" status of everything in 1:31. We note further that Gen 2:19 describes the formation of the animals. All of this suggests that the storyline events of 2:5-25 are events of the "sixth day" of 1:24-31.

This being the case, it makes sense to see if we can interpret 2:5-6 in a simple way as background to the events that begin in verse 7. Can we cooperate with the invitation of verse 4, to read the two pericopes as complementary, in a way that is consonant with the grammar and the lexicon? We can if we take note of several factors. First, we note that discourse-oriented exegesis shows that the "days" of Genesis 1 need not be the 24-hour kind, and that hence the events of the sixth "day" could be some number of weeks, years, or even longer after the beginning of the creation week in 1:3.

We note further that the semantic range of Hebrew 'eres in verse 5: is it "earth," "land," or "region"? It is fairly common to take 'eres as "earth" (cf. RSV, NASB, NIV text), and to find in this a description of the condition of the whole earth. But the word quite often means simply "land" (cf. explanation of verse 15 hardly supports Futato's contention that the narrative of Genesis 2 is not governed by chronological concerns ("Because it had rained," 11-13; Futato takes verse 9-14 as an expansion of verse 8a).
NIV margin), either as dry land (its sense in 1:10-31) or as a specific region (its sense in 2:11-13), where God made man prior to moving him into the Garden of Eden.  

The discourse relation of verses 5-6 to verse 7, as the setting for the events of verse 7, makes the latter line of interpretation the simplest: that is, in a particular year, at the time of year before the rain fell to water the ground (e.g. in Palestine it does not rain during the summer), and at the time when the "mist" (or perhaps "spring"?) was rising (possibly beginning to rise), in some unspecified region, God formed the first human, planted a garden, and then transplanted the man to this new place to enjoy it and care for it. This interpretation has the advantages of (1) following directly from the discourse relations; (2) using ordinary meanings of words; and (3) being easily harmonious with Gen 1:1-2:3.

IV. A Revised Translation of Gen 2:4-8 (with notes)

We may modify the RSV given above to reflect this analysis (I have included several philological comments as annotations):

(4) These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created,
in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.

(5) When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up--for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, (6) and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground--(7) then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

(8) And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

31 I.e., "when the Lord God made." For this meaning of beyom followed by an infinitive construct see Brown-Driver-Briggs, 400a; P Jouon and T. Muraoka, Grammar of Biblical Hebrew (Rome: Editrice Pontifico Biblico, 1993), §129p A.2.

32 Futato, "Because it had rained," 4, argues that the only legitimate interpretation of siah hassadeh "bush of the field" must be "wild shrubs of the steppe," in contrast to the seb hassadeh "small plant of the field," which he takes to be cultivated (a possibility mentioned in Kidner, "Genesis 2:5, 6," 109).

33 Taking the verb ya'aleh, as most do, as a simple Qal imperfect with 'ed as subject. Futato, "Because it had rained," 8, argues that we should interpret the verb as a Hiphil imperfect with the Lord God as subject of both it and the next verb wehisqa "and it was a mist that he [i.e., the Lord God] was bringing up, and he was watering." This is possible, but the reasons he offers do not settle the question. (1) When the first element of a clause is not the verb, as is here the case, it is more expected for that element to be the subject. (2) A noun in the semantic category "mist/cloud" can as easily be the subject of the Qal of the verb (cf. 1 Kgs 18:44) as the object of the Hiphil (cf. Ps 135:7). (3) Similarly, it is quite proper for a source of water to be the subject of the next verb, wehisqa "and was watering" (as it is in verse 10). The credibility of his argument that "God would be the explicit solver of both the problem of no rain and the problem of no cultivator" (8-9) depends in turn on the prior acceptance of his literary reading for the text, and hence cannot establish that reading in opposition to others. Hence I see no reason not to translate this in the usual way.

34 The Hebrew has a definite article ha'ddam, "the man," namely the first human. I would take the article as anaphoric to the mention of "man" in verse 5, which does not have the article: literally, "and as for man, there was none to work." Without the article it becomes the proper name Adam in verse 20. In verse 23, using different terms, the "woman" (issa) is taken from the "man" (is).

35 That is, loose soil.

36 Many suppose that there is a play on words here: "human" is 'adam, while "ground" is 'adama, from which man was made and now to which lie will returns because of sin (cf. 3:19). Since, however, in verse 19 God also "forms" the animals "from the ground," we must not push this too far.

37 It is difficult to give a good literal translation of this term (nepes hayya, traditionally "living soul": cf. 1:21, 24, 30; 2:7, 19) and still have elegant English: "living animated being" would be the closest. Delitzsch, Genesis, 94, points out that since a nepes (often rendered "soul") animates a body, the expression denotes "animated material beings, bodies having souls." In I Cor 15:45, Paul employs the LXX rendering of this expression, ψυχή ζωής ("living soul") in the sense of "living natural being," to contrast with the supernatural life he denotes by nvefµa ("spirit") in verses 44-46.

38 In Collins, "The wayyiqtol as pluperfect," 140 n.75, I reject the NIV's making this pluperfect: "the Lord God had planted." I think the end of the verse, 'aser yasar "whom he had formed," places the formation of verse 7 prior to the planting of verse 8.
Philosophical and Scientific Pointers to Creatio ex Nihilo

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To answer Leibniz's question of why something exists rather than nothing, we must posit three alternatives: the universe either had a beginning or had no beginning; if it had a beginning, this was either caused or uncaused; if caused, the cause was either personal or not personal. Four lines of evidence, two philosophical and two scientific, point to a beginning of the universe. If the universe had a beginning, it is inconceivable that it could have sprung uncaused out of absolute nothingness. Finally, the cause of the universe must be personal in order to have a temporal effect produced by an eternal cause. This confirms the biblical doctrine of creatio ex nihilo.

"... The first question which should rightly be asked," Wrote Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, is "Why is there something rather than nothing?"¹ I want you to think about that for a moment. Why does anything exist at all, rather than nothing? Why does the universe, or matter, or anything at all exist, instead of just nothing, instead of just empty space?

Many great minds have been puzzled by this problem. For example, in his biography of the renowned philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, Norman Malcolm reports,

... he said that he sometimes had a certain experience which could best be described by saying that 'when I have it, I wonder at the existence of the world. I am then inclined to use such phrases as "How extraordinary that anything "should exist!" or "How extraordinary that the world should exist!"'²
Similarly, the English philosopher J. J. C. Smart has said, "... my mind often seems to reel under the immense significance this question has for me. That anything exists at all does seem to me a matter for the deepest awe."³

Why does something exist instead of nothing? Unless we are prepared to believe that the universe simply popped into existence uncaused out of nothing, then the answer must be: something exists because there is an eternal, uncaused being for which no further explanation is possible. But who or what is this eternal, uncaused being? Leibniz identified it with God. But many modern philosophers have identified it with the universe itself. Now this is exactly the position of the atheist: the universe itself is uncaused and eternal; as Russell remarks, "... the universe is just there, and that's all."⁴ But this means, of course, that all we are left with is futility and despair, for man's life would then be without ultimate significance, value, or purpose. Indeed, Russell himself acknowledges that it is only upon the "firm foundation of unyielding despair" that life can be faced.⁵ But are there reasons to think that the universe is not eternal and uncaused, that there is something more? I think that there are. For we can consider the universe by means of a series of logical alternatives:
By proceeding through these alternatives, I think we can demonstrate that it is reasonable to believe that the universe is not eternal, but that it had a beginning and was caused by a personal being, and that therefore a personal Creator of the universe exists.

**Did the Universe Begin?**

The first and most crucial step to be considered in this argument is the first: that the universe began to exist. There are four reasons why I think it is more reasonable to believe that the universe had a beginning. First, I shall expound two philosophical arguments and, second, two scientific confirmations.

*The first philosophical argument:*
1. An actual infinite cannot exist.
2. A beginningless series of events in time is an actual infinite.
3. Therefore, a beginningless series of events in time cannot exist.

A collection of things is said to be actually infinite only if a part of it is equal to the whole of it. For example, which is greater? 1, 2, 3, . . . or 0, 1, 2, 3, . . . According to prevailing mathematical thought, the answer is that they are equivalent because they are both actually infinite. This seems strange because there is an extra number in one series that cannot be found in the other. But this only goes to show that in an actually infinite collection, a part of the collection is equal to the whole of the collection. For the same reason, mathematicians state that the series of even numbers is the same size as the series of all natural numbers, even though the series of all natural numbers contains all the even numbers plus an infinite number of odd numbers as well. So a collection is actually infinite if a part of it is equal to the whole of it.

Now the concept of an *actual* infinite needs to be sharply distinguished from the concept of a *potential* infinite. A potential infinite is a collection that is increasing
without limit but is at all times finite. The concept of potential infinity usually comes into play when we add to or subtract from something without stopping. Thus, a finite distance may be said to contain a potentially infinite number of smaller finite distances. This does not mean that there actually are an infinite number of parts in a finite distance, but rather it means that one can keep on dividing endlessly. But one will never reach an "infini-tieth" division. Infinity merely serves as the limit to which the process approaches. Thus, a potential infinite is not truly infinite—it is simply indefinite. It is at all points finite but always increasing.

To sharpen the distinction between an actual and a potential infinite, we can draw some comparisons between them. The concept of actual infinity is used in set theory to designate a set which has an actually infinite number of members in it. But the concept of potential infinity finds no place in set theory. This is because the members of a set must be definite, whereas a potential infinite is indefinite—it acquires new members as it grows. Thus, set theory has only either finite or actually infinite sets. The proper place for the concept of the potential infinite is found in mathematical analysis, as in infinitesimal calculus. There a process may be said to increase or diminish to infinity, in the sense that the process can be continued endlessly with infinity as its terminus. The concept of actual infinity does not pertain in these operations because an infinite number of operations is never actually made. According to the great German mathematician David Hilbert, the chief difference between an actual and a potential infinite is that a potential infinite is always something growing toward a limit of infinity, while an actual infinite is a completed totality with an actually infinite number of things. A good example contrasting these two types of infinity is the series of past, present, and future events. For if the universe is eternal, as the atheist claims, then there have occurred in the past
an actually infinite number of events. But from any point in the series of events, the number of future events is potentially infinite. Thus, if we pick 1845, the birthyear of Georg Cantor, who discovered infinite sets, as our point of departure, we can see that past events constitute an actual infinity while future events constitute a potential infinity. This is because the past is realized and complete, whereas the future is never fully actualized, but is always finite and always increasing. In the following discussion, it is exceedingly important to keep the concepts of actual infinity and potential infinity distinct and not to confuse them.

A second clarification that I must make concerns the word "exist." When I say that an actual infinite cannot exist, I mean "exist in the real world" or "exist outside the mind." I am not in any way questioning the legitimacy of using the concept of actual infinity in the realm of mathematics, for this is a realm of thought only. What I am arguing is that an actual infinite cannot exist in the real world of stars and planets and rocks and men. What I will argue in no way threatens the use of the actual infinite as a concept in mathematics. But I do think it is absurd that an actual infinite could exist in the real world.

I think that probably the best way to show this is to use examples to illustrate the absurdities that would result if an actual infinite could exist in reality. For suppose we have a library that has an actually infinite number of books, on its shelves. Imagine furthermore that there are only two colors, black and red, and these are placed on the shelves alternately: black, red, black, red, and so forth. Now if somebody told us that the number of black books and the number of red books is the same, we would probably not be too surprised. But would we believe someone who told us that the number of black books is the same as the number of black books plus red books? For in this latter collection there are all the black books plus an infinite number of red books as well. Or imagine there are
three colors of books or four or five or a hundred. Would you believe someone if he told you that there are as many books in a single color as there are in the whole collection? Or imagine that there are an infinite number of colors of books. I'll bet you would think that there would be one book per color in the infinite collection. You would be wrong. If the collection is actually infinite then according to mathematicians, there could be for each of the infinite colors an infinite number of books. So you would have an infinity of infinities. And yet it would still be true that if you took all the books of all the colors and
added them together, you wouldn't have any more books than if you had taken just the books of a single color.

Suppose each book had a number printed on its spine. Because the collection is actually infinite, that means that every possible number is printed on some book. Now this means that we could not add another book to the library. For what number would we give to it? All the numbers have been used up! Thus, the new book could not have a number. But this is absurd, since objects in reality can be numbered. So if an infinite library could exist, it would be impossible to add another book to it. But this conclusion is obviously false, for all we have to do is tear out a page from each of the first hundred books, add a title page, stick them together, and put this new book on the shelf. It would be easy to add to the library. So the only answer must be that an actually infinite library could not exist.

But suppose we could add to the library. Suppose I put a book on the shelf. According to the mathematicians, the number of books in the whole collection is the same as before. But how can this be? If I put the book on the shelf, there is one more book in the collection. If I take it off the shelf, there is one less book. I can see myself add and remove the book. Am I really to believe that when I add the book there are no more books in the collection and when I remove it there are no less books? Suppose I add an infinity of books to the collection. Am I seriously to believe there are no more books in the collection than before? Suppose I add an infinity of infinities of books to the collection. Is there not now one single book more in the collection than before? I find this hard to believe.

But now let's reverse the process. Suppose we decide to loan out some of the books. Suppose we loan out book number 1. Isn't there now one less book in the collection? Suppose we loan out all the odd-numbered books. We have loaned out an infinite number of books, and yet
mathematicians would say there are no less books in the collection. Now when we loaned out all these books, that left an awful lot of gaps on the shelves. Suppose we push all the books together again and close the gaps. All these gaps added together would add up to an infinite distance. But, according to mathematicians, after you pushed the books together, the shelves will still be full, the same as before you loaned any out! Now suppose once more we loaned out every other book. There would still be no less books in the collection than before. And if we pushed all the books together again, the shelves would still be full. In fact, we could do this an infinite number of times, and there would never be one less book in the collection and the shelves would always remain full. But suppose we loaned out book numbers 4, 5, 6, . . . out to infinity. At a single stroke, the collection would be virtually wiped out, the shelves emptied, and the infinite library reduced to finitude. And yet, we have removed exactly the same number of books this time as when we first loaned out all the odd numbered books! Can anybody believe such a library could exist in reality?

These examples serve to illustrate that an actual infinite cannot exist in the real world. Again I want to underline the fact that what I have argued in no way attempts to undermine the theoretical system bequeathed by Cantor to modern mathematics. Indeed, some of the most eager enthusiasts of trans-finite mathematics, such as David Hilbert, are only too ready to agree that the concept of actual infinite is an idea only and has no relation to the real world. So we can conclude the first step: an actual infinite cannot exist.

The second step is: a beginningless series of events in time is an actual infinite. By "event" I mean something that happens. Thus, this step is concerned with change, and it holds that if the series of past events or changes just goes back and back and never had a beginning, then, considered all together, these events constitute an actually
infinite collection. Let me provide an example. Suppose we ask someone where a certain star came from. He replies that it came from an explosion in a star that existed before it. Suppose we ask again, where did that star come from? Well, it came from another star before it. And where did that star come from?--from another star before it; and so on and so on. This series of stars would be an example of a beginningless series of events in time. Now if the universe has existed forever, then the series of all past events taken together constitutes an actual infinite. This is because for every event in the past, there was an event before it. Thus, the series of past events would be infinite. Nor could it be potentially infinite only, for we have seen that the past is completed and actual; only the future can be described as a potential infinite. Therefore, it seems pretty obvious that a beginningless series of events in time is an actual infinite.

But that leads us to our conclusion: therefore, a beginningless series of events in time cannot exist. We have seen that an actual infinite cannot exist in reality. Since a beginningless series of events in time is an actual infinite, such a series cannot exist. That means the series of all past events must be finite and have a beginning. But because the universe is the series of all events, this means that the universe must have had a beginning.

Let me give a few examples to make the point clear. We have seen that if an actual infinite could exist in reality, it would be impossible to add to it. But the series of events in time is being added to every day. Or at least so it appears. If the series were actually infinite, then the number of events that have occurred up to the present moment is no greater than the number of events up to, say, 1789. In fact, you can pick any point in the past. The number of events that have occurred up to the present moment would be no greater than the number of events up to that point, no matter how long ago it might be.

Or take another example. Suppose Earth and Jupiter
have been orbiting the sun from eternity. Suppose that it
takes the Earth one year to complete one orbit, and that it
takes Jupiter three years to complete one orbit. Thus for
every one orbit Jupiter completes, Earth completes three.
Now here is the question: if they have been orbiting from
eternity, which has completed more orbits? The answer is:
they are equal. But this seems absurd, since the longer they
went, the farther and farther Jupiter got behind, since every
time Jupiter went around the sun once, Earth went around
three times. How then could they possibly be equal?
Or, finally, suppose we meet a man who claims to have been counting from eternity, and now he is finishing: -5, -4, -3, -2, -1, 0. Now this is impossible. For, we may ask, why didn't he finish counting yesterday or the day before or the year before? By then an infinity of time had already elapsed, so that he should have finished. The fact is we could never find anyone completing such a task because at any previous point he would have already finished. But what this means is that there could never be a point in the past at which he finished counting. In fact we could never find him counting at all. For he would have already finished. But if no matter how far back in time we go, we never find him counting, then it cannot be true that he has been counting from eternity. This shows once more that the series of past events cannot be beginningless. For if you could not count numbers from eternity, neither could you have events from eternity.

These examples underline the absurdity of a beginningless series of events in time. Because such a series is an actual infinite, and an actual infinite cannot exist, a beginningless series of events in time cannot exist. This means that the universe began to exist, which is the point that we set out to prove.

The second philosophical argument:
1. The series of events in time is a collection formed by adding one member after another.
2. A collection formed by adding one member after another cannot be actually infinite.
3. Therefore, the series of events in time cannot be actually infinite.

This argument does not argue that an actual infinite cannot exist. But it does argue that an actual infinite cannot come to exist by the members of a collection being added one after the other.

The series of events in time is a collection formed by
adding one member after another. This point is pretty obvious. When we consider the collection of all past events, it is obvious that those events did not exist simultaneously--all at once--but they existed one after another in time: we have one event, then another after that, then another, then another, and so on. So when we talk about the collection of "all past events," we are talking about a collection that has been formed by adding one member after another.

The second step is the crucial one: a collection formed by adding one member after another cannot be actually infinite. Why?--because no matter how many members a person added to the collection, he could always add one more. Therefore, he would never arrive at infinity. Sometimes this is called the impossibility of counting to infinity. For no matter how many numbers you had counted, you could always count one more. You would never arrive at infinity. Or sometimes this is called the impossibility of traversing the infinite. For you could never cross an infinite distance. Imagine a man running up a flight of stairs. Suppose every time his foot strikes the top step, another step appears above it. It is clear that the man could run forever, but he would never cross all the steps because you could always add one more step.

Now notice that this impossibility has nothing to do with the amount of time available. It is of the very nature of the infinite that it cannot be formed by adding one member after another, regardless of the amount of time available. Thus, the only way an infinite collection could come to exist in the real world would be by having all the members created simultaneously. For example, if our library of infinite books were to exist in the real world, it would have to be created instantaneously by God. God would say: "Let there be. . .!" and the library would come into existence all at once. But it would be impossible to form the library by adding one book at a time, for you would never arrive at infinity.
Therefore, our conclusion must be: \textit{the series of events in time cannot be actually infinite}. Suppose there were, for example, an infinite number of days prior to today. Then today would never arrive. For it is impossible to cross an infinite number of days to reach today. But obviously, today has arrived. Therefore, we know that prior to today there cannot have been an infinite number of days. That means that the number of days is finite and therefore the universe had a beginning. Contemporary philosophers have shown themselves to be impotent to refute this reasoning.\textsuperscript{9} Thus, one of them asks,

\begin{quote}
If an infinite series of events has preceded the present moment, how did we get to the present moment? How could we get to the present moment--where we obviously are now--if the present moment was preceded by an infinite series of events?\textsuperscript{10}
\end{quote}

Concluding that this difficulty has not been overcome and that the issue is still in dispute, Hospers passes on to another subject, leaving the argument unrefuted. Similarly another philosopher comments rather weakly, "It is difficult to show exactly what is wrong with this argument," and with that remark moves on without further ado.\textsuperscript{11}

Therefore, since the series of events in time is a collection formed by adding one member after another, and since such a collection cannot be actually infinite, the series of events in time cannot be actually infinite. And once more, since the universe is nothing else than the series of events, the universe must have had a beginning, which is precisely the point we wanted to prove.

\textit{The first scientific confirmation}: the evidence from the expansion of the universe. Prior to the 1920's, scientists assumed that the universe as a whole was a stationary object--it was not going anywhere. But in 1929 an astronomer named Edwin Hubble contended that this was not true. Hubble observed that the light from distant galaxies appeared to be redder than it should be. He explained this
by proposing that the universe is expanding. Therefore, the light from the stars is affected since they are moving away from us. But this is the interesting part: Hubble not only showed that the universe is expanding, but that it is expanding the same in all directions. To get a picture of this, imagine a balloon with dots painted on it. As you blow up the balloon, the dots get further and further apart. Now those dots are just like the galaxies in space. Everything in the universe is expanding outward. Thus, the relations in the universe do not change, only the distances.

Now the staggering implication of this is that this means that at some point in the past, the entire known universe...
was contracted down to a single point, from which it has been expanding ever since. The farther back one goes in the past, the smaller the universe becomes, so that one finally reaches a point of infinite density from which the universe began to expand. That initial event has come to be known as the "big bang."

How long ago did the big bang occur? Only during the 1970's have accurate estimates become available. In a very important series of six articles published in 1974 and 1975, Allan Sandage and G. A. Tammann estimate that the big bang occurred about 15 billion years ago. Therefore, according to the big bang model, the universe began to exist with a great explosion from a state of infinite density about 15 billion years ago. Four of the world's most prominent astronomers describe that event in these words.

The universe began from a state of infinite density. Space and time were created in that event and so was all the matter in the universe. It is not meaningful to ask what happened before the big bang; it is somewhat like asking what is north of the north pole. Similarly, it is not sensible to ask where the big bang took place. The point-universe was not an object isolated in space; it was the entire universe, and so the only answer can be that the big bang happened everywhere.

This event that marked the beginning of the universe becomes all the more amazing when one reflects on the fact that a state of "infinite density" is synonymous to "nothing." There can be no object that possesses infinite density, for if it had any mass at all, it would not be infinitely dense. Therefore, as astronomer Fred Hoyle points out, the big bang theory requires the creation of matter from nothing. This is because as one goes back in time, he reaches a point at which, in Hoyle's words, the universe was "shrunk down to nothing at all." Thus, what the big bang model requires is that the universe had a beginning and was created out of nothing.
Now some people are bothered with the idea that the universe began from nothing. This is too close to the Christian doctrine of creation to allow atheistic minds to be comfortable. But if one rejects the big bang model, he has apparently only two alternatives: the steady state model or the oscillating model. Let's examine each of these.

The steady state model holds that the universe never had a beginning but has always existed in the same state. Ever since this model was first proposed in 1948, it has never been very convincing. According to S. L. Jaki, this theory never secured "a single piece of experimental verification."\(^{15}\) It always seemed to be trying to explain away the facts rather than explain them. According to Jaki, the proponents of this model were actually motivated by "openly anti-theological, or rather anti-Christian motivations.\(^ {16}\) A second strike against this theory is the fact that a count of galaxies emitting radio waves indicates that there were once more radio sources in the past than there are today. Therefore, the universe is not in a steady state after all. But the real nails in the coffin for the steady state theory came in 1965, when A. A. Penzlas and R. W. Wilson discovered that the entire universe is bathed with a background of microwave radiation. This radiation background indicates that the universe was once in a very hot and very dense state. In the steady state model no such state could have existed, since the universe was supposed to be the same from eternity. Therefore, the steady state model has been abandoned by virtually everyone. According to Ivan King, "The steady-state theory has now been laid to rest, as a result of clear-cut observations of how things have changed with time."\(^ {17}\)

But what of the oscillating model of the universe? John Gribbin describes this model,

The biggest problem with the big bang theory of the origin of the universe is philosophical--perhaps even theological--what
was there before the bang? This problem alone was sufficient to give a great initial impetus to the steady state theory, but with that theory now sadly in conflict with the observations the best way around this initial difficulty is provided by a model in which the universe expands, collapses back again, and repeats the cycle indefinitely.\textsuperscript{18}

According to this model, the universe is sort of like a spring, expanding and contracting from eternity. It is only in the last three or four years that this model has been discredited. The key question here is whether the universe is "open" or "closed." If it is "closed," then the expansion will reach a certain point, and then the force of gravity will pull everything together again. But if the universe is "open," then the expansion will never stop, but will just go on and on forever. Now clearly, if the universe is open, then the oscillating model is false. For if the universe is open, it will never contract again.

Scientific evidence seems to indicate that the universe is open. The crucial factor here is the density of the universe. Scientists have estimated that if there are more than about three hydrogen atoms per cubic meter on the average throughout the universe, then the universe would be closed. That may not sound like very much, but remember that most of the universe is just empty space. I shall not go into all the technicalities of how scientists measure the density of the universe,\textsuperscript{19} but let me simply report their conclusions. According to the evidence, the universe would have to be at least ten times denser than it is for the universe to be closed.\textsuperscript{20} Therefore, the universe is open by a wide margin. Let me share with you the conclusion of Alan Sandage: (1) the universe is open, (2) the expansion will not reverse, and (3) the universe has happened only once and the expansion will never stop.\textsuperscript{21} The evidence therefore appears to rule out the oscillating model, since it requires a closed universe. But just to drive the point home, let me add that the oscillating
model of the universe is only a theoretical possibility, not a real possibility. As Dr. Tinsley of Yale observes, in oscillating models

. . . even though the mathematics says that the universe oscillates, there is no known physics to reverse the collapse and bounce back to a new expansion. The physics seems to say that those models start from the big bang, expand, collapse, then end.  

Hence, it would be impossible for the universe to be oscillating from eternity. Therefore, this model is doubly impossible.

The second scientific confirmation: the evidence from thermodynamics. According to the second law of thermodynamics, processes taking place in a closed system always tend toward a state of equilibrium. In other words,
unless energy is constantly being fed into a system, the processes in the system will tend to run down and quit. For example, if I had a bottle that was a sealed vacuum inside, and I introduced into it some molecules of gas, the gas would spread itself out evenly inside the bottle. It is virtually impossible for the molecules to retreat, for example, into one corner of the bottle and remain. This is why when you walk into a room, the air in the room never separates suddenly into oxygen at one end and nitrogen at the other. It is also why when you step into your bath you may be confident that it will be pleasantly warm instead of frozen solid at one end and boiling at the other. It is clear that life would not be possible in a world in which the second law of thermodynamics did not operate.

Now our interest in the law is what happens when it is applied to the universe as a whole. The universe is a gigantic closed system, since it is everything there is and there is nothing outside it. What this seems to imply then is that, given enough time, the universe and all its processes will run down and the entire universe will slowly grind to a halt. This is known as the heat death of the universe. Once the universe reaches this state, no further change is possible. The universe is dead.

There are two possible types of heat death for the universe. If the universe is "closed," then it will die a hot death. Tinsley describes such a state:

If the average density of matter in the universe is great enough, the mutual gravitational attraction between bodies will eventually slow the expansion to a halt. The universe will then contract and collapse into a hot fireball. There is no known physical mechanism that could reverse a catastrophic big crunch. Apparently, if the universe becomes dense enough, it is in for a hot death.

If the universe is closed, it is in for a fiery death from which it will never re-emerge. But suppose, as is more
likely, the universe is "open." Tinsley describes the final state of this universe:

If the universe has a low density, its death will be cold. It will expand forever, at a slower and "lower rate. Galaxies will turn all of their gas into stars, and the stars will burn out. Our own sun will become a cold, dead remnant, floating among the corpses of other stars in an increasingly isolated milky way.\(^{25}\)

Eventually, equilibrium will prevail throughout, and the entire universe will reach its final state from which no change will occur.

Now the question that needs to be asked is this: If given enough time, the universe will reach heat death, then why is it not in a state of heat death now if it has existed forever, from eternity? If the universe did not begin to exist, then it should now be in a state of equilibrium. Its energy should be all used up. For example, I have a very loud wind-up alarm clock. If I hear that the clock is ticking --which is no problem, believe me--then I know that at some point in the recent past, it was wound up and has been running down since then. It is the same with the universe. Since it has not yet run down, this means, in the words of one baffled scientist, "In some way the universe must have been wound up."\(^{26}\)

Some scientists have tried to escape this conclusion by arguing that the universe oscillates back and forth from eternity and so never reaches a final state of equilibrium. I have already observed that such a model of the universe is a physical impossibility. But suppose it were possible. The fact is that the thermodynamic properties of this model imply the very beginning of the universe that its proponents seek to avoid. For as several scientists have pointed out, each time the model universe expands it would expand a little further than before. Therefore if you traced the expansions back in time they would get smaller and smaller and smaller. Therefore, in the
words of one scientific team, "The multicycle model has an infinite future, but only a finite past." As yet another writer points out, this implies that the oscillating model of the universe still requires an origin of the universe prior to the smallest cycle.

Traditionally, two objections have been urged against the thermodynamic argument. First, the argument does not work if the universe is infinite. I have two replies to this. (a) The universe is not, in fact, infinite. An actually spatially infinite universe would involve all the absurdities entailed in the existence of an actual infinite. But if the universe is torus-shaped, then it may be both open and finite. The objection is therefore irrelevant (b) Even if the universe were infinite, it would still come to equilibrium. As one scientist explained in a letter to me, if every finite region of the universe came to equilibrium, then the whole universe would come to equilibrium. This would be true even if it had an infinite number of finite regions. This is like saying that if every part of a fence is green, then the whole fence is green, even if there are an infinite number of pickets in the fence. Since every single finite region of the universe would suffer heat death, so would the whole universe. Therefore, the objection is invalid.

The second objection is that maybe the present state of the universe is just a fluctuation in an overall state of equilibrium. In other words, the present energy is sort of like just the ripple on the surface of a still pond. But this objection loses all sense of proportion. Fluctuations are so tiny, they are important only in systems where you have a few atoms. In a universe at equilibrium, fluctuations would be imperceptible. A chart showing fluctuations in such a universe would be simply a straight line. Therefore, since the present universe is in disequilibrium, what are we to conclude? According to the English scientist P. C. W. Davies, the universe must have been created a finite time ago and is in the process of winding down. He says the present disequilibrium cannot be
a fluctuation from a prior state of equilibrium, because prior to this creation event the universe simply did not exist. Thus, Davies concludes, even though we may not like it, we must conclude that the universe's energy "was simply 'put in' at the creation as an initial condition."33

Thus, we have two philosophical arguments and two scientific confirmations of the point we set out to defend: the universe began to exist. In light of these four reasons, I think we are amply justified in affirming the first alternative of our first disjunction: the universe had a beginning.

Was the Beginning Caused?

Having concluded that the evidence points to a beginning of the universe, let's now turn to our second set
of alternatives: the beginning of the universe was either caused or not caused. I am not going to give a lengthy defense of the point that the beginning of the universe must have been caused. I do not think I need to. For probably no one in his right mind sincerely believes that the universe could pop into existence uncaused out of nothing. Even the famous sceptic David Hume admitted that it is preposterous to think anything could come into existence without a cause.  

This is doubly true with regard to the entire universe. As the English philosopher C. D. Broad confessed, "I cannot really believe in anything beginning to exist without being caused by something else which existed before and up to the moment when the thing in question began to exist." As still another philosopher has said, "It seems quite inconceivable that our universe could have sprung from an absolute void. If there is anything we find inconceivable it is that something could arise from nothing," The old principle that "out of nothing nothing comes" is so manifestly true that a sincere denial of this point is practically impossible.

This puts the atheist on the spot. For as Anthony Kenny explains, "A proponent of (the big bang) theory, at least if he is an atheist, must believe that the matter of the universe came from nothing and by nothing." That is a pretty hard pill to swallow. In terms of sheer "believability," I find it intellectually easier to believe in a God who is the cause of the universe than in the universe's popping into existence uncaused out of nothing or in the universe's having existed for infinite time without a beginning. For me these last two positions are intellectually inconceivable, and it would take more faith for me to believe in them than to believe that God exists. But at any rate, we are not dependent upon just "believability," for we have already seen that both philosophical and empirical reasoning points to a beginning for the universe, So the alternatives are only two: either the universe was caused to exist or it sprang into existence wholly uncaused
out of nothing about fifteen billion years ago. The first alternative is eminently more plausible.

It is interesting to examine the attitude of scientists toward the philosophical and theological implications of their own big bang model. It is evident that there are such implications, for as one scientist remarks, "The problem of the origin (of the universe) involves a certain metaphysical aspect which may be either appealing or revolting." Unfortunately, the man of science is, as Albert Einstein once observed, "a poor philosopher," For these implications seem either to escape or not to interest most scientists. Since no empirical information is available about what preceded the big bang, scientists simply ignore the issue. Thus, Hoyle, after explaining that the big bang model cannot inform us as to where the matter came from or why the big bang occurred, comments, "It is not usual in present day cosmological discussions to seek an answer to this question; the question and its answer are taken to be outside the range of scientific discussion." But while this attitude may satisfy the scientist, it can never satisfy the philosopher. For as one scientist admits, the big bang model only describes the initial conditions of the universe, but it cannot explain them. As yet another astronomer concludes, "So the question 'How was the matter created in the first place?' is left unanswered." Thus, science begs off answering the really ultimate question or where the universe came from. Scientific evidence points to a beginning of the universe; as rigorous scientists we may stop there and bar further inquiry, but as thinking men must we not inquire further until we come to the cause of the beginning of the universe?

Either the universe was caused to exist or it just came into existence out of nothing by nothing. Scientists refuse to discuss the question; but philosophers admit that it is impossible to believe in something's coming to exist uncaused out of nothing. Therefore, I think that an unprej-
udiced inquirer will have to agree that the beginning of the universe was caused, which is the second point we set out to prove: the universe was caused to exist.

Now this is a truly remarkable conclusion. For this means that the universe was caused to exist by something beyond it and greater than it. Think of what that means! This ought to fill us with awe, for it is no secret that the Bible begins with these words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

**Personal or Impersonal Creator?**

I think there is good reason to believe that the cause of the universe is a personal creator. This is our third set of alternatives: *personal or not personal.*

The first event in the series of past events was, as we have seen, the beginning of the universe. Furthermore, we have argued that the event was caused. Now the question is: If the cause of the universe is eternal, then why isn't the universe also eternal, since it is the effect of the cause? Let me illustrate what I mean. Suppose we say the cause of water's freezing is the temperature's falling below 0 degrees. Whenever the temperature is below 0 degrees, the water is frozen. Therefore, if the temperature is always below 0 degrees, the water is always frozen. Once the cause is given, the effect must follow. So if the cause were there from eternity, the effect would also be there from eternity. If the temperature were below 0 degrees from eternity, then any water around would be frozen from eternity. But this seems to imply that if the cause of the universe existed from eternity then the universe would have to exist from eternity. And this we have seen to be false.

One might say that the cause came to exist just before the first event. But this will not work, for then the cause's coming into existence would be the first event, and we must ask all over again for its cause. But this cannot go on forever, for we have seen that a beginningless series
of events cannot exist. So there must be an absolutely first event, before which there was no change, no previous event. We have seen that this first event was caused. But the question then is: how can a first event come to exist if the cause of that event is always there? Why isn't the effect as eternal as the cause? It seems to me that there is only one way out of this dilemma. That is to say that the cause of the universe is personal and chooses to create the universe in time. In this way God could exist changelessly from eternity, but choose to create the world in time. By "choose" I do not mean God changes his mind. I mean God intends from eternity to create a world in time. Thus, the cause is eternal, but the effect is not. God chooses from eternity to create a world with a beginning;
therefore, a world with a beginning comes to exist. Hence, it seems to me that the only way a universe can come to exist is if a Personal Creator of the universe exists. And I think we are justified in calling a personal creator of the universe by the name "God."

I would just like to make a few concluding remarks on God's relationship to time. Many people say God is outside time. But this is not what the Bible says. According to James Barr in his book *Biblical Words for Time*, the Bible does not make it clear whether God is eternal in the sense that he is outside time or whether he is eternal in the sense of being everlasting throughout all time. Thus, the issue must be decided philosophically. It seems to me that prior to creation God is outside time, or rather there is no time at all. For time cannot exist unless there is change. And prior to creation God would have to be changeless. Otherwise, you would get an infinite series of past events in God's life, and we have seen such an infinite series is impossible. So God would be changeless and, hence, timeless prior to creation. I think that the doctrine of the Trinity can help us to understand this. Before creation, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed in a perfect and changeless love relationship. God was not lonely before creation. In the tri-unity of his own being, he had full and perfect personal relationships. So what was God doing before creation? Someone has said, "He was preparing hell for those who pry into mysteries." Not at all He was enjoying the fullness of divine personal relationships with an eternal plan for the creation and salvation of human persons. The Bible says Christ "had been chosen by God before the creation of the world, and was revealed in these last days for your sake." Nor was this plan decided on several eons ago. It is an eternal plan: The Bible says, "God did this according to his eternal purpose which he achieved through Christ Jesus our Lord." Why did God do this? Not because he needed us, but simply out of his grace and love.
So in my opinion, God was timeless prior to creation, and He created time along with the world. From that point on God places Himself within time so that He can interact with the world He has created. And someday God will be done with this creation. The universe will not, in fact, suffer cold death, for God will have done with it by then. The Bible says,

You, Lord, in the beginning created the earth, and with your own hands you made the heavens. They will all disappear, but you will remain; they will all grow old like clothes. You will fold them up like a coat, and they will be changed like clothes. But you are always the same, and you will never grow old.46

We have thus concluded to a personal Creator of the universe who exists changelessly and independently prior to creation and in time subsequent to creation. This is the central idea of what theists mean by "God."

REFERENCES
8Ibid., p. 151.
16Ibid.
19See Gott, *et. al.* for a good synopsis.

22Beatrice M. Tinsley, personal letter.

23In saying the universe is a closed system, I do not mean it is closed in the sense that its expansion will eventually contract. I rather mean that there is no energy being put into it. Thus, in the thermodynamic sense the universe is closed, but in the sense of its density the universe is open. One must not confuse "open" and "closed" in thermodynamics with "open" and "closed" in expansion models.

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36 Zwart, Time, p. 240.
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44 1 Peter 1:20. (TEV)
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GENESIS 38: ITS CONTEXT(S) AND FUNCTION

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Often analysis of the biblical text by critical scholars is based on perceived textual anomalies so subtle and obscure as to escape detection by all but those well trained in critical methodology. The discontinuity between Genesis 38 and its surrounding context, however, is readily apparent to even a casual reader.1 Genesis 37 begins the Joseph story and continues to the point of Joseph's being sold to Potiphar in Egypt. Genesis 38 then shifts the focus back to Canaan and describes a rather peculiar incident in the life of Judah. Gen 39:1 returns to the Joseph story and essentially repeats the information in 37:36 before continuing to recount Joseph's experience in Potiphar's household.

Most modern scholars have supposed that chapter 38 and the Joseph story come from different sources,2 but this does not account for why the material was inserted into the Joseph story at this point. Some have argued that there was simply no other place to put the Judah-Tamar story because Judah is still at home with his brothers in chapter 37 and moves to Egypt with his family before the Joseph

1 I recently asked a class to read the Book of Genesis, and one student asked why Genesis 38 was placed where it is. The student described his feeling about the way the chapter interrupts the Joseph story as "like hitting a speed bump."

2 The general opinion among critical scholars is that material about Joseph comes from both the J and E sources; J combined the traditional material into something like the present Joseph story. According to this view, Genesis 38 represents an independent tradition which was incorporated into the present narrative by J. For discussion of these matters and references see, e.g., C. Westermann, Genesis 37-50 (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986) 15-23; 46-50; J. A. Emerton, "Some Problems in Genesis 38," VT 25 (1975) 346-60; G. W. Coats, From Canaan to Egypt, CBQ MS 4 (1976) 60-80, Criswell Theological Review 5.2 (1991) 247-257
story is concluded. The chronological indicators suggest that this is the perspective of the narrative. The statement in Cen 38:1, xvhh tfb yhyv ("it happened at that time"), while not a precise indicator of time, suggests that the incidents in 38 took place subsequent to the events in 37, while the circumstantial clause with which 39 begins, hmyrcm ("now Joseph had been taken to Egypt"), implies that the events of that chapter were simultaneous with those reported in 38.3

Despite the way the Judah-Tamar material interrupts the Joseph story, certain literary indicators have long been recognized as in some way tying the two stories together.4 The most striking of the parallels between the stories is the repetition of the words . . . hHlw/vhlwyv . . . rkyv . . . xn rkh rmxtv/vrmxyv ("they/she sent... they/she said, 'Please recognize it'. . . he recognized . . . he said") at climactic points in chapters 37 and 38.5 Other suggested verbal parallels include the descent in 37:8:1 (drvy Jsvyv, Joseph had been taken down) and the descent in 39:1 (drvy Jsvyv, Joseph had been taken down). Other thematic parallels, will be pointed out below.

As Goldin points out, these literary and thematic indicators suggest that whoever put the story as we have it in its present position, must have been guided by what seemed to him a sound literary principle: either a thematic or idiomatic connection must be present between the story of the sale of Joseph into bondage and the account of Judah's encounter with Tamar.6

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3 Even as these general chronological indicators give some sense of sequence and chronology to the narrative, it must also be noted that the chronology appears to be presented from a Semitic perspective rather than a modern Western one. In particular, the chronology given in the Joseph story indicates that 22 years lapsed between the sale of Joseph by his brothers and the family's move to Egypt during the second year of the famine (37:2; 41:46, 47; 45:6, 11). The list of those entering Egypt includes the grandchildren of Judah (46:12). It is hard to imagine how Judah could have gotten married, had children, married them to Tamar, sent her away to let Shelah grow fathered Perez by Tamar (after it is obvious to Tamar that Judah does not intend to give her to Shelah despite the "many days" that have passed and the fact that Shelah is now old enough for marriage), and have Perez grow up and father two children in the space of 22 years. For a discussion of this question see U. Cassuto, "The Story of Tamar and Judah," Biblical and Oriental Studies (2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1973), 1.32-40.

4 These connectors were recognized by many of the rabbis. For a summary of these comments see Cassuto, 30-31; J. Goldin, "The Youngest Son or Where Does Genesis 38 Belong," JBL 96 (1977) 28-29; M. Kasher, Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation (New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1962) 5.57-87.


Despite these indications of an intended connection between Genesis 38 and the Joseph story in the final form of the biblical text, most scholars have focused on the meaning of the text at some point in a hypothetical prehistory of the text.\textsuperscript{7} Theories about the prehistory of the text, however, tend to be speculative and uncertain since they are generally based on reconstructions of history and culture for which there is minimal evidence. It seems more appropriate to consider the meaning of the passage in its present canonical context since it is there that the tradition is fixed in its final and authoritative form. In the context of the canon, though, there are sometimes a number of smaller contexts that influence and even determine the meaning of an individual pericope. A major task of exegesis involves the identification of the relevant contexts in order to determine how they affect the meaning of the passage. There are several different contexts that are appropriate for understanding the Judah-Tamar story.

Genesis 38 reports interesting facts about Judah, Tamar, the descendants of Judah, and about social institutions like levirate marriage. Placing this, perhaps once independent, unit into the Joseph story gives it a meaning and significance beyond those individual details. Its setting in the larger context of the Jacob story further expands the significance, but it is only when the unit is seen in the context of the patriarchal narrative and God's promise to Abraham that the full significance of the story can be appreciated. The various contexts are not contradictory, but complement one another, and each contributes uniquely to the full impact of the story intended by the biblical author.

First of all, Genesis 38 functions in its own right as a somewhat independent and self-contained story about Judah and his family.\textsuperscript{8} The story relates how Judah left the other members of his family, settled among the Canaanites and married a Canaanite woman. If one truly limits the context to Genesis 38, it is impossible to tell whether this was thought to be good or bad.\textsuperscript{9} In reality, of course, if the story circulated independently either before or after it was placed in its

\textsuperscript{7} Emerton ("Judah and Tamar," VT 29 [1979] 403) for example, has argued that "it cannot be taken for granted that a story in Genesis had a single meaning and purpose and retained them unchanged throughout its history first, probably, as an independent unit of oral tradition and then a part of a written document."

\textsuperscript{8} As O'Callaghan (Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association, "The Structure and Meaning of Genesis 38: Judah and Tamar" 5 [1981] 73-74) points out, both the significant vocabulary (numerous family/kinship terms) and the content (Judah's descendants and their offspring) make it clear that the subject of the chapter is Judah's family.

\textsuperscript{9} Emerton (VT 29, 410-13) argues that the story may have originated among the Canaanites, since there is no negative evaluation of the Canaanites and since Tamar, who was probably a Canaanite, is presented in a more favorable light than Judah or his sons.
present literary context in Genesis, the culture would have provided sufficient clues for evaluating Judah's conduct without the necessity of explicitly providing them in the story. What is clear from the narrative is that Judah's first two sons, Er and Onan, were wicked and the LORD took their lives. No details are given of Er's wickedness, but Onan's sin lay in his refusal to father a child with Tamar, his deceased brother's wife, as the responsibilities of levirate marriage required. Judah apparently concluded that since each son to whom Tamar was married had died, she was a threat to the family, and he devised an excuse for delaying her marriage to his remaining son Shelah—a delay that he intended to make permanent by simply ignoring her. Judah's attempt to thwart the intent of levirate marriage and thus deprive Tamar of her right to bear an heir for the family, and perhaps of her rightful place in society as well, reflects badly on Judah and provides certain details about both the values of the society and the institution of levirate marriage.

The story is also important in terms of the history of the tribe of Judah since Judah's behavior clearly jeopardized the future of the family (and in the broader biblical context the line of Messiah). Tamar's "virtue" in circumventing the problem of Judah's refusal not only protected her own rights but played a significant role in preserving what was to become one of the most prominent tribes in Israel. Earlier critical scholars supposed that the references to individuals actually refer to the various clans in the tribe of Judah and describe their settlement and movement in Canaan. This idea, of course, presupposes a late date for the material, but as Emerton points out, it is possible that while the story is about individuals, it also reflects in a general way the later history and movement of the tribes. Thus a story about individuals may have continued to be used beyond its relevance for family history because it generally reflected the situation of the various clans in the tribe of Judah. The subsequent popularity of the story is evident from the blessing given by the people of Bethlehem to Ruth when her engagement to Boaz (apparently through a form of levirate marriage) was announced.

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10 S. Niditch ("The Wronged Woman Righted: An Analysis of Genesis 38," HTR 72 [1979] 143-49) has suggested that in ancient Israelite society "the young woman is allowed only two proper roles. She is either an unmarried virgin in her father's home or she is a faithful, child producing wife in her husband's or husband's family's home" (145). By denying Tamar the right to produce children -in the family, Judah made her a misfit in the social structure. By bearing Judah's children as the result of her deception, "Her position in society is regularized. She now becomes a true member of the patriarchal clan" (148).

11 See Emerton, VT 29, 404-5 for references.
12 Ibid.
Genesis 38 also occurs in the context of the Joseph story, though as Westermann has noted, the chapter is not really an addition to the Joseph story, but rather "belong(s) to the conclusion of the Jacob story." Even so, the Judah-Tamar story does interrupt the Joseph story, and it must be interpreted in the context of that material. A literary function of Genesis 38 is immediately apparent; it increases tension in the Joseph story in much the same way that cliff-hanger endings in serials and soap operas increase suspense and generate interest. As Baldwin notes, "While the reader is in suspense to know how Joseph fared in Egypt, he is forced to attend to this review of Judah's private life." Von Rad says, "It is really effective for Joseph to disappear from the reader completely for a time just as he disappeared from the father and the brothers."

Commentators have long recognized that the doctrine of retribution is set in clear relief by the juxtaposition of Genesis 37 and 38. In Gen 37:26-27 Judah suggests selling Joseph to the Ishmaelite/Midianite traders, and while it is not explicitly stated, it seems likely that he was significantly involved in the plan to slay a male goat in 37:31, dip Joseph's tunic in the blood and present that "evidence" to Jacob for him to recognize in 37:32, and draw his own conclusions about what happened to Joseph. Judah is thus instrumental in depriving Jacob of a child and deceiving him with evidence. In chapter 38 Judah loses two sons and, as Alter notes, the deceiver himself is deceived by the evidence he gave in pledge for the kid in 38:17. According to the Midrash, "God said to Judah, 'You deceived your father with a kid. By your life, Tamar will deceive you with a kid.'... God said to Judah, 'You said to your father, "Please recognize." By your life Tamar will say to you, "Please recognize."'"

14 Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 22.
17 As a result of Judah's suggestion Joseph's life is spared (v 27), but the text does not present Judah in a totally positive light in this. His comment in v 26, "What profit is it for us to kill our brother?" uses a word for profit (בָּאָמֶר) that has quite negative connotations, "illicit gain."
18 At the very least, Judah joined with the others as they slaughtered the goat. Given Judah's leadership role in suggesting that they sell him, it seems likely that he was significantly involved in this part of the scheme as well.
19 R Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative (New York: Basic, 1981) 11. While the terms male goat (שֵׁן רֹתִים) in 37:31 and kid (דָּרְכָו) in 38:17, 20 are not identical, both the wording and meaning are sufficiently similar to establish the literary connection.
20 Gen. Rab. 84:11-12 as cited by Alter, ibid. As was indicated in the previous note, the Hebrew terms for "male goat" in 37:31 and "kid" in 38:17, 20 are similar but not identical. The Hebrew expression (נַעֲרָה) translated "please recognize" in the citation from the midrash is identical in Gen 37:31 and 38:25.
By setting the Judah-Tamar story in the context of the Joseph story, a deliberate contrast seems to have been made between Judah's conduct toward Tamar, who may have been a Canaanite, and the conduct of Joseph with another foreign woman, Potiphar's wife. There is no real basis for evaluating Judah's marriage to a Canaanite woman and his subsequent behavior toward Tamar in either the Judah-Tamar story or the Joseph story, and the implications of this contrast between the two brothers are not clear apart from the broader context of the patriarchal narrative.

It has also been suggested that the incident reported in Genesis 38 represents a turning point in the life of Judah. He appears in a very negative light when he suggests the sale of Joseph, as he does in chapter 38 in his dealings with Tamar, in his relationship to the Canaanites (see below), and perhaps to the rest of his family as well. Judah's guilt in refusing to give Tamar to his youngest son is clear from his confession in 38:26 ("She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah"). Throughout the rest of the Joseph story, Judah appears as the leader of the brothers, and while Baldwin's description of him as "sensitive and self Forgetful" is perhaps overly positive, he does appear to have changed. In 44:18-34 he intercedes for Benjamin before Joseph when he could easily have justified abandoning Benjamin in an Egyptian jail since he assumed

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21 Certainly the daughter of Shua, whom Judah married, was a Canaanite woman. While the text does not indicate the national origin of Tamar, as Emerton points out (VT 26 [1976] 90), "most commentators believe that Tamar was thought by J to be a Canaanite.... The obvious implication is that Tamar was a Canaanite." J. Sailhamer (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers [The Expositor's Bible Commentary; 12 vols.; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990], 2.232) argues that if Tamar had been a Canaanite it would likely have been mentioned. He suggests that "through Tamar's clever plan, then, the seed of Abraham was preserved by not being allowed to continue through the sons of the Canaanite. . . . The line was continued through Judah and Tamar." The force of this suggestion is reduced by the fact that at other points in the Davidic Messianic line there are foreign women such as Rahab and Ruth.

22 E.g., A Berlin (Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative [Sheffield: Almond, 1983] 40) says that Judah "seems to undergo a transformation in Gen. 38 and from that point on is different from the way he appeared in Gen. 37." See also Baldwin, 163.

23 Goldin (JBL 96, 40-43) suggests that Judah may well have deliberately thwarted Reuben's plan to rescue Joseph (which was perhaps Reuben's attempt to get back in his father's good graces) in order to protect the position of family leadership that had come to him essentially by default as the result of his three older brothers misdeeds (see, e.g., Gen 49:3-7).

24 Goldin (JBL 96, 43) argues that Genesis 38 is part of the theme of leadership in Jacob's family, and it may well be that a change in Judah's character contributes to that theme. Goldin maintains that chapter 38 is an important part of the vita of the one chosen to lead the family.

25 Baldwin, 163.
that the boy had actually stolen the prime minister's cup and thus deserved the punishment he got. This suggests that Judah is a different person than the one who 20 years earlier sold his little brother as a slave because of jealousy and irritation over Joseph's dreams and his favored status with Jacob and over the negative reports that Joseph brought Jacob about the brothers.

Genesis 38 also occurs in the context of the Jacob story, and is similar to other narratives about Jacob's children (e.g., Genesis 34; 35:22-23). As was noted above, the material may have been placed here because of the general chronology of the events. Judah was with his brothers in the Hebron Valley in chapter 37, and he and his wife and children went into Egypt with the rest of Jacob's family before the end of the Joseph story. As Goldin has made clear, however, a major theme of both the Jacob and Joseph stories is the question of who will be the leader of Jacob's family, and the narrative contains several examples that illustrate that the usual principle of primogeniture was not the exclusive prerogative for leadership. At times this was determined by the sovereign choice of God (e.g., the choice of Jacob before the twins were born [Gen 25:23]); in other instances the normal right was forfeited because of grossly improper behavior (e.g., Reuben, Simeon, and Levi). Judah's leadership is affirmed despite the fact that he was not the first born or the second or even the third born and despite Jacob's preference for Joseph. God's providence is evident in this even though human factors such as the brothers' irresponsible behavior play a role as well. The possibility that chapter 38 recounts an event that began a transformation in Judah's character may contribute to this theme also.

Finally, the Judah-Tamar story is set in the context of the entire patriarchal narrative, and this context also provides significant clues to its meaning. It is well known that the promise made by God to

that he had made with his father is an important consideration in evaluating Judah's action as well.

27 See above, n. 14.
28 Goldin, 37-38, makes the interesting suggestion that Reuben's sexual intercourse with his father's concubine was not the cause of his losing the birthright but the result of his perception that he would be unjustly passed over in favor of Jacob's favorite, Joseph. Since possession of the father's concubines apparently signified mastery and authority over him, Reuben tried to take matters into his own hands.
29 See Gen 49:3-7. Actually in the case of Jacob and Esau elements of both sovereign choice and irresponsible human behavior can be seen. Alongside the pre-birth oracle declaring Jacob's rule over his brother, Esau's disregard for the promise and its spiritual dimensions seems to have contributed significantly to his loss of the rights of the firstborn.
30 See above and nn. 21-25.
Abraham in Gen 12:1-3 dominates the entire patriarchal narrative. The provisions of that promise included an heir for Abraham (and for his descendants as well), the land, and the assurance that the descendants of Abraham would become a great nation that would bless all the families of the earth. The stories of the patriarchs revolve around that promise and the various obstacles to its fulfillment encountered by the patriarchs. Abraham responded to God's call and went to Canaan where he was immediately confronted with a major obstacle to possessing the land--"Now the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen 12:6). Then came a famine in the land that threatened his family's survival in Canaan. This obstacle drove them out of the land and into Egypt where Abraham's deceit landed Sarah in Pharaoh's harem--a rather significant threat to the fulfillment of the promise--and she had to be extricated by God. The promise was threatened by Sarah's barrenness, by the command to sacrifice Isaac, by Isaac's not being married at age 40, and then by Rebekah's barrenness. Jacob's forced exile from the promised land threatened the fulfillment, and the obstacles did not end with Jacob's return from Aram.

For Abraham and Isaac the threats to the promise seem to focus primarily on the heir; in the case of Jacob they shift primarily to that part of the promise involving the land. As the promise theme continues to unfold in the Jacob story, a theme introduced earlier is developed in a way that is relevant for understanding Genesis 38. As was noted above, it is difficult to evaluate Judah's marriage to a Canaanite woman on the basis of either Genesis 38 or the Joseph story. The Jacob story taken together with the broader patriarchal narrative does provide a basis for such a judgment. As Abraham was about to send his servant to Aram to find a wife for Isaac, he made the servant formally swear that he would not take a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanites (Gen 24:4). This same anti-Canaanite perspective is evident in 26:34-35 where Isaac and Rebekah's displeasure over Esau's marriage to two Canaanite women (see also 28:8-9) is emphasized. Genesis 34 from the Jacob story suggests one reason for this perspective.

Genesis 34 relates an incident in which a Canaanite named Shechem had sexual relations with Jacob's daughter Dinah and...
approached her family requesting permission to marry her. In his negotiations with Jacob, Hamor, Shechem's father and the Canaanite leader, described the advantage that such an arrangement would have for the family of Jacob: "Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. Thus you shall live with us, and the land shall be open before you; live and trade in it, and acquire property in it" (Gen 34:9-10). When the sons of Jacob imposed circumcision as the condition for the marriage, Shechem explained to his fellow citizens why they should submit to this and afterward said, "Only on this condition will the men consent to live with us, to become one people" (34:22). What was viewed by the Canaanites as a significant advantage (becoming one people), was viewed by the biblical authors as a significant threat to Israel's existence, and this perspective provides a basis for judging Judah's behavior in Genesis 38. The story of Dinah in Genesis 34 shows that the Canaanites living in the land constituted a major threat to the promise in that assimilation with the Canaanites would make it impossible for Abraham's descendants ever to become a great nation as Gen 12:3 predicts.

Judah's departure from his brothers and his settling among the Canaanites represented a threat to the family in that it would be more difficult to maintain the family's distinctive Yahwistic values in isolation from the other family members. Settling among the Canaanites and intermarrying with them posed the significant risk of being assimilated with them (ie., becoming one people). It is likely that Judah's evil sons reflect the values they learned from their father and constitute evidence for Judah's departure from the values deemed proper by the biblical author. It is possible that the repetition of the verb הָעַד, "he turned aside" in 38:1, "he turned aside to a man, an Adullamite, whose name was Hirah"; and 38:16, "he turned aside to her [ie., the prostitute] by the road" is meant to suggest that Judah was committing fornication in both instances (first spiritually and then physically), an even closer parallel if Tamar was a Canaanite. Hirah,

33 This theme continues into the Book of Judges. As Block ("The Period of the Judges: Religious Disintegration Under Tribal Rule," in Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K Harrison led. A Gileadi; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988] 48) has suggested, literary indicators make it clear that the editor of the Book of Judges is making the point that --the spiritual condition of the people inhabiting the land of Canaan at the end of the settlement period is the same as it had been at the beginning. It has made no difference that the identity of the people has changed. ...He has exposed the total Canaanization of Israelite society." Thus the threat anticipated in Genesis proves to be fully legitimate. The close parallels between the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 and the story of the Levite and his concubine in Judges 19 makes it clear that interaction with the Canaanites has resulted in assimilation of their values to the point where the Benjaminites are little different from the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.
Judah's Canaanite friend, uses the term נָשַׁת עֵצֶם, “cult prostitute” (vv 21-22) for the woman with whom Judah had sexual relations while the narrator (v 15) uses the word נוֹחַ, “harlot, prostitute.” Perhaps the Canaanite's use of a term replete with connotations of Canaanite fertility worship would remind the reader that cult prostitution constituted an important part of Canaanite worship.

Even as the story of Dinah and Shechem in chapter 34 implies the threat the Canaanites posed to the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, the Judah-Tamar story shows that Judah willingly contributed to the problem by his behavior. As Ross points out, chapter 38 “present[s] a picture of a corrupt family. Judah continued his irresponsible course: he had earlier moved the sale of Joseph, then separated from his brothers and married a Canaanite, and now had seen the fruit of that marriage thoroughly evil.” He further notes, “If it had been left up to Judah, the family would have assimilated with Canaanites.” Aalders says that the events of chapter 38 “especially bring to light the critical danger that threatened the 'chosen seed' if they remained in Canaan. Mixed marriages with the Canaanites could only lead to the people of Israel losing their identity among the Canaanites and eventually being absorbed by them.”

This suggests another important connection with the Joseph story although the verbal and literary connectors are not explicit ones. Genesis 38 shows that living in Canaan among its inhabitants jeopardized the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham because the sons of Jacob were unable and/or unwilling to resist assimilation with the Canaanites. The family of Judah, the leading spokesman for the brothers, and the one destined to become the leading tribe and father of the royal and messianic line, was threatened with extinction as a result of Judah's actions.

34 In strong contrast to Judah's behavior, Joseph is presented in chap. 39 as resisting the advances of a married foreign woman. It is true that Joseph does marry an Egyptian, and the daughter of a priestess at that. There are no indications in the text that this was viewed negatively and that this constituted a threat to the promise or the future of Abraham's descendants or to proper Yahwistic values. It is unclear whether it was the context (i.e., Joseph was living in Egypt where he perhaps had few choices for a wife other than Egyptians. In addition, Pharaoh apparently arranged for the marriage) or if it was Joseph's character that caused the biblical author to view that marriage to a foreign woman as appropriate. Generally Egyptians were not viewed in the same overwhelmingly negative terms as Canaanites although at a later time Solomon's marriage to an Egyptian princess was viewed negatively and was seen as a major step that set Solomon on the course that led him to apostasy.

35 A P. Ross, Creation and Blessing (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1988) 616.
36 Ibid. 619.
Joseph's time in Egypt and his elevation to a high position there did much to insure the survival of Jacob's family during the famine that affected the entire Near East, but there appears to be a significance that goes beyond the short term. Gen 43:26-34 describes a meal that Joseph ate with his brothers in Egypt before he revealed himself to them. Verse 32 explains that Joseph, the brothers, and the Egyptians ate separately. This was done, according to v 32, because "the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians." Likewise, Joseph's family was allowed to live in the area of Goshen, apparently apart from the areas where the Egyptians lived, because "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians" (46:34). The situation in Egypt was very different from that in Canaan. In Egypt the problem posed by intermarriage and assimilation was far less significant, not because of the Israelites but rather because the Egyptians would not have anything to do with them. In Egypt the descendants of Abraham were protected from themselves because the Egyptians considered them to be an abomination. Thus Jacob's family was placed in a cultural environment where God's promise that they would become a great nation could be fulfilled.

As Aalder suggests, "Jacob's descendants had to leave Canaan if they were to develop as a separate and distinctive people. It was imperative that they be moved into a situation where they could not possibly mix with their countrymen. This, of course, happened in Egypt." The necessity for the Egyptian sojourn in Israel's becoming a "a great nation," as predicted in Gen 12:2 is suggested by Joseph in 50:20, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order... to preserve many people alive [לַחֲמִית עַם רָב]." While the same kind of direct verbal correspondence that often links passages and ideas is not found here, it seems likely that "people," and "nation," are essentially synonymous here and that Joseph's statement is related to the situation found in Exodus 1. Exod 1:20 says, "וְהָעָם מִצְמָה מֹאָד" (וְהָעָם מִצְמָה מֹאָד), "the people have become very numerous and strong," and this prompts the Pharaoh to do something about a situation he considers quite dangerous (e.g., Exod 1:7, 9, 12, 20). It seems likely that the statement in Exodus is meant to emphasize the fulfillment of the promise to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation.

Recognizing the various contexts in which the Judah-Tamar story is set is essential in understanding the significance of the events described in Genesis 38. The contexts complement one another, and each provides unique information that illuminates the purpose(s) of the story intended by the biblical author.

38 Ibid.
ARTICLE I.

CREATION; OR, THE BIBLICAL COSMOGONY
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCIENCE.¹

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THE grand history of creation with which the Bible
opens is thrown into the region of myths or dreams by
two classes of writers: the scientific, who know the many
positive scientific errors in the accepted interpretation,
and see no method of harmonizing the two diverse
records; the exegetical, who hold that exegesis alone
should determine the meaning of the chapter.

One such short-sighted exegete, for example, referring
to Professor Guyot's recent work, seeks to enforce his
various objections by such remarks as the following:
"Biblical interpretation is older far than geology!"
"Skill and knowledge in the physical sciences by no
means necessarily involve skill and knowledge in the
science of interpretation." "A man may have consider-
able knowledge about terminal moraines, and little or no
such knowledge about the origin, history, and diction of

¹ Creation; or, the Biblical Cosmogony in the Light of Modern Science.
By Arnold Guyot, LL.D., Blair Professor of Geology and Physical Geogra-
y in the College of New Jersey. pp. 140. 12mo. New York: Charles
Scribner's Sons. 1884.
[For Professor Dana's former statements of his views upon this subject,
see articles by him in BIBLIOTHECA SACRA, vol. xiii. (1856) pp. 80-130,
631-655, and vol. xiv. (1857) pp. 338-413, 460-525, and 854-874.--EDS.]
mogony, and that the brief review of the majestic march of events before man makes a wonderfully befitting prelude to God's message of law and love to man, constituting the Bible.

I do not mean to say that Professor Guyot's views as to the interpretation, or as to the meaning of the Hebrew words in which the oldest form of the document appears, are in every case beyond question. But I do claim for them the first place among all the interpretations that have been offered. It is now thirty-five years since Professor Guyot, two years after his arrival in America, gave me, at my house one evening, his views on the first chapter of Genesis. I listened to his interpretations of the successive verses with increasing interest to the end, and with increasing admiration and affection for the earnest, simple-minded, and learned Christian. Professor Guyot took up the subject after years of training in biblical as well as natural science, and pursued it with deep and honest, searchings for the truth, believing both in the Bible and in Nature, and in the inspiration and truth of the first chapter of the Bible.

For convenience of reference I here insert

THE COSMOGONY OF GENESIS. 1

CHAP. I. 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, day first. 6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters: 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, day second.

1 The few variations from the Authorized Version have been made by Professor Wm. G. Ballantine.
And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass; the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, day third.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And there was morning and there was evening, day fourth.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and let fowl fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb
for meat: and it was so. 31 And God saw every thin; that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, day the sixth.

CHAP. II.- 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

In the following pages I briefly review and explain Professor Guyot's interpretation, without following precisely the order in his work, adding in some parts other, thoughts of his from our many conversations, where they could aid in the illustration of the subject-thoughts which, with more leisure than was afforded him in the few last weeks of his life, he would probably have brought into his volume. Where we differ on any point I make mention of it. I have also here and there added an argument in support of his views.

I. In approaching the subject we have to recognize the fact that man's comprehension of any idea communicated by another is limited by the amount and character of his knowledge and beliefs, and that the interpretation of the terms employed in the communication would be determined thereby. For example, the idea of space about the earth would necessarily take shape in the mind as that of a solid firmament with men who never had any other idea on the subject, even if the author imparting the idea were divine. The idea of fluid in space, whether liquid or gaseous, would become that of waters to those who already believed in the "waters above the heavens." (See 148th Psalm, from which Professor Guyot makes a citation. The general expression "plants means to ordinary men ordinary plants, such as are everywhere in view; and only to one, educated in science or philosophy are the essential attributes of a plant present in the simplest of the species. Accordingly, the terms or words by which the ideas in the Bible cosmogony are expressed must necessarily, although these ideas were divinely com-
municated, bear some impress of want of knowledge or comprehension. This important psychological fact is not referred to by Professor Guyot. My attention was drawn to it nearly thirty years since by the eminent theologian of New England, Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor.

I suppose it to be far from certain that Moses was the inspired man who received from God the record of his creative works. It seems probable that the record was a chapter of sacred truth among men long before his time, and that it was the source of the early monotheism of the world, and of some of the cosmogonic ideas associated with this belief.

II. The brief review of creation in Genesis sets forth only the grand stages of progress in the creative work, or those great events that marked epochs in the history. Such it should have been if written by a man of supreme intelligence and exalted philosophy, and such it must be if God is the author. The number of these epochs in the account is eight. A method of interpretation that puts among the eight an event not of this epochal character should, therefore, be received with doubt.

III. System under law pervades God's works, and the discovery of it is one great end of all philosophic study of nature. Professor Guyot looked for system in the arrangement of the Mosaic record, as well as in the relations of the works themselves; and the result he reached is in itself profound testimony to its divine origin.

Of the six days of Genesis, the first three are like the last three in having light as the work of the first of the three days, and in having two great works on the last of the three. There is, thus, a parallelism in movement between the two halves, or the first and second triads. On the first day, the light was the light of the universe, dependent on the constitution of matter; on the fourth day, the first of the second triad, it is light from the sun, moon, and stars to the earth.

Further: the first triad included the events connected
with the *inorganic* history of the earth, the last of which, on the third clay, was the arrangement of the lands and seas; the second triad was occupied with the events of the organic history, from the creation of the first animals to man.

Further: the third day, or last of the first triad, ends with the creation of plants, as its second great work, or the introduction of the new element, life, which was to be the chief feature of the progress during the succeeding era; and on the sixth day, the last of the second triad, the, second great work is the creation of man, a being made "in the image of God," and destined through his spiritual nature to immortal progress.

This system in the divine record is not a figment of the student's fancy. It is a fact; a fact that displays purpose in the author of the document, and knowledge beyond that of ancient or any time, and philosophy more than human.

IV. The first verse of the chapter, besides proclaiming God the creator of the "heavens and the earth," teaches that the beginning of the heavens and the earth was the beginning of the existing universe. The words imply that the, heavens and the earth began to exist in some state or condition; which condition, as regards the earth, was one waste and void," or, as another translator writes it "formless and naught."

The actual condition is partly indicated by the work of the first day, "Let light be, and light was." The light was the first light of the universe. The phenomena of light have been proved to be a result of molecular action, and to be dependent upon fundamental qualities of matter as now constituted. Man has ascertained the wave-lengths in the vibration of molecular force corresponding to light of different parts of the spectrum, and also other laws of light. He has found, moreover, that the laws of heat and of electrical and chemical action are so involved with those of light that all these conditions are convertible and
one in molecular origin. The fiat "Let light be" was, consequently, the beginning of light, heat, and electrical and chemical action in matter, which matter till then was inert; the beginning of laws of action which have since remained unchanged; the beginning of the activity which led to chemical combinations, and later to systems of worlds, to suns and to planets; the beginning, therefore, of "the Generations of the Heavens," or of the development of the universe.

The physical facts with regard to light—which, it should be noted, are not modern facts, but as old as the first creative day thus prove to us that the "waters," upon the face of which the Spirit of God moved when the fiat of the first day went forth, were not literally waters, whatever the strict meaning of the Hebrew word; nor was "the earth" a defined sphere in space.

V. The word day in the chapter, with the accompanying expression, *evening and morning*, is a stumbling-block to many. The ordinary exegete finds only 24-hour days, and stands to it that the earth in its revolution was the timepiece then in use. Professor Guyot concludes from the five different uses of the word "day" in the narrative, and the fact that it is employed for three days before there was a sun to divide the day from the night (an argument which others have used), that the earth's day of twenty-four hours may not be, and cannot be, the day of Genesis; and, hence, that the days were unlimited periods--time of whatever length the work in each case required; and that the expression "evening and morning" indicates, by a familiar metaphor, the beginning and consummation of each work. If, as is now clear, the Genesis is an account of the creation of the universe, days of twenty-four hours, measured off by the revolving earth, can have no place, in the history. Moreover, it is hardly possible that Moses, who wrote, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past," and, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst
formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," entertained so belittling an idea of the Creator and his work. Before the first day there was no literal evening; there was darkness; and then, as the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, at the fiat, there was light. The succession was "evening and morning," a beginning and a consummation of the great work.

VI. *The dividing of the waters from the waters by a firmament* is the recorded work of the *second* day. The beginning of activity in matter took place on the first or preceding clay; the appearance over the earth of dry land amid the gathered waters was to be the work of the third or following day. The historical event of chief importance between the two was the making of the earth.

This division of the "waters from the waters" has usually been interpreted as a separation, by an expanse or firmament, of waters of the earth's surface from the waters, that is, the clouds, above; or, of the earth's molten surface from the clouds. Such an event is too trivial for a place among the eight great works, and also is out of place on the second day. It accomplished nothing, for it left the earth under its swaddling-band of clouds. The events of the first and third days help us to understand that of the second or intervening day.

On the first day, matter was endowed with force: The next great event was the making of the universe thus begun; it was the dividing-up of this now active matter, diffused through the immensity of space; the subdividing and arranging of it, until the system of the universe had been developed, and ultimately the earth had become a defined sphere, with the "heavens of heavens," or a great expanse, around it. The words describe sufficiently well such a division of the "waters from the waters"; or, perhaps, more strictly, the final result, the earth separated from the diffused matter of space in which, on the first clay, it was still involved. By the fiat, the rotation of matter in
space was begun (if this was not part of the work of the first clay), and the system of the universe was carried forward. The earth, though thus defined, was still an unfinished earth.

It matters little what may be the literal meaning of the word translated "firmament." Although regarded generally among the Jews as signifying a solid firmament, it is far from certain that Moses, who was versed in all Egyptian learning, so considered it. Professor Guyot quotes from verse twentieth of the narrative the expression, "fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament," as evidence on this point.

VII. The gathering together of the waters into one place, called seas, and, thereby, the appearing of the dry land, was the work of the first half of the third day. After the defining of the earth in the solar system--at first, no doubt, a liquid sphere--slow cooling and consolidation went on and, finally, the condensation of the larger part of the enveloping vapors took place, covering the sphere with water. Still later, the waters were gathered into one place and the dry land appeared, thus determining the arrangements of the surface, and making the sphere ready for living species. With this finishing event the inorganic history of the the earth was brought to an end.

Geological readings reach back to this period of the first dry land--that of the so-called Archaean era, the geography of which era is now pretty well understood. Of the earth in its molten state the science has no facts from observed rocks, and derives its conclusions and conjectures mostly from facts and general principles in chemical and physical science.

VIII. The second fiat of the third day commences with the words, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb

Professor Guyot places the actual defining of the earth under the work of the third day, instead of with that of the second day, as above. The order and character of the events are the same in the two methods of arrangement.
yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit." In the expressions, "yielding seed," "having seed in itself," the words describe, with wonderful precision, as Professor Guyot observes, the characteristic of a living species, distinguishing it from mineral or inorganic substances. Beings having powers of growth and reproduction were now facts, and this was the great creation. These powers are exhibited in the simplest plants; and hence the new creation was in an important sense complete, although represented at first only by the lower tribes of plants. Obedience to the fiat, "Let the earth bring forth," continued in after time; new and higher species coming forth in succession, and ordinary fruit-trees not until the later part of geological time, long after the Coal period.

With reference to the introduction of life, science has no explanation; for no experiments have resulted, in making from dead matter a living species. We can only say, "God created." The growing plant is on a higher level than that of ordinary molecular law; for it controls and subordinates to itself chemical forces, and thereby is enabled to make out of mineral matter chemical compounds and living structures which the forces without this control are incapable of. Only when growth ceases, and death consequently ensues, does ordinary chemical law regain control, and then decomposition commences. More than this, the living being, before it dies, produces germs which develop into other like forms, with like powers; and thus cycles of growth are continued indefinitely. In making its tissues, the living plant is storing force for the sustenance and purposes of beings of a still higher grade --those of the animal kingdom; beings that cannot live on mineral materials. There is, hence, reason for believing that the power which so controls and exalts chemical forces, raising them to the level required by the functions of a plant, cannot come from unaided chemical forces; and much less that which carries them to a still higher level, --that of the living, sentient animal.
In the Bible record, the creation of plants preceded that of animals; and this order is sustained by facts from nature. For the reason just stated, the plant, as Guyot says, "is the indispensable basis of all animal life." Further, the lower species of plants are capable of existing in waters hotter than animals can endure; and, therefore, the condition of the waters of the globe would have suited them very long before they were fitted for animal life; very long, because diminution in temperature must have gone on with extreme slowness.

Professor Guyot observes, further, that, since vegetation uses the animal-destroying gas, carbonic acid, as a means of growth, it served to purify the ancient waters and air, and, hence, was a befitting part of the inorganic division of the history. He also well says that the living principle fundamental to the plant was prophetic of a higher organic, era beyond, that of animal life.

Distinct remains of plants have not yet been found in Archaean rocks. These rocks have been so changed by heat that relics of plants would have been obliterated or obscured, had they existed. Some of the rocks contain great quantities of graphite, or black lead, a variety of carbon that in some cases (as in Carboniferous slates in Rhode Island, and at Worcester, Mass.) has resulted from the action of heat on coal beds. The graphite which is common in the Archaean rocks of Canada is regarded by many as evidence that Archaean time had marine plants in great abundance.

IX. On the fourth day, "God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven." In a subsequent sentence, the words are: "made the two great lights," "the stars also." But the purpose of the lights is set forth in detail in each of the five verses relating to the day's work: "to divide the day from the night"; to be "for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years"; "to give light upon the earth"; to rule over the day, and over the night"; "to divide the light from the darkness"; "the greater light
to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night."
The great purpose of the sources of light was, therefore,
accomplished by them, whether they were "made" or
made to appear. It was fully accomplished when the sun
became to the earth the actual source of day and night
and seasons, and that would have been when it first shone
through the earth's long-existing envelope of clouds.
Professor Guyot speaks of this envelope as consisting of
electrically lighted vapor, and calls it a photosphere,
resembling, in some respects, that now about the sun; and
he observes that the sun, moon, and stars became visible
only after its disappearance. The modern "Aurora" is
a result of electric disturbances over the present cold
sphere; and there can be no doubt of the vastly greater
intensity of such disturbances during the period of the
earth's cooling. But, whatever the fact as to the electric
light about the earth when the temperature had greatly
diminished, there is no doubt that the envelope of clouds
was of long continuance, and that the time was slowly but
finally reached when the earth was free from it. One of
the sublimest passages in literature is the reference to the
work of the third day in creation, contained in God's
answer to Job "out of the whirlwind " (chapter xxxviii.);
and, although often quoted, it may well be introduced
here: "Who shut up the sea with doors?" "When I
made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a
swaddling-band for it, and established my decree upon it,
and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou
come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be
stayed." The final disappearance of that swaddling-band
would necessarily have resulted in the events of the
fourth day.

This first appearance of the sun naturally comes after
the creation of plants; for the cloud envelope would
have continued long after the earth's temperature had
diminished to that degree which admitted of the growth
of the lower plants. And, besides, it is a natural prelude
to the organic era, the sun's light being essential to all higher grades of animal species; though not to the lower.

X. The fiat of the fifth day reads: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly." The words which follow describe the lower orders of animals, or the Invertebrates, together with all Vertebrates excepting Mammals (or quadrupeds and man). The fiat of the first half of the sixth day begins with "Let the earth bring forth," and the words that follow describe the Mammals, the division of Vertebrates of which Man is the head.

The succession in the living tribes given in the chapter is: (i.) Plants (third day); (2.) Invertebrates and the lower Vertebrates (fifth day); (3.) Mammals, or the higher Vertebrates (first half of the sixth day); (4.) Man, the head of Mammals (second half of the sixth day). This course of progress accords in a general way with the readings of science, and the accordance is exact with the succession made out for the earliest species of these grand divisions, if we except the division of birds about which there is doubt. Geology has ascertained many details with regard to the earth's life and the upward gradations in the various tribes. But the grand fact of progress, and the general order in the succession, were first announced in the Cosmogony of the Bible:

Science might say that the principles of zoological classification would have been conformed to more closely if the work of the fifth day had ended with the Invertebrates, leaving all the Vertebrates to the sixth day. But this arrangement, viewed in the light of the philosophy of history, is no improvement; since the record, like the rest of the Bible, has special reference to Man, in whom is the consummation of all history. The sixth day's work includes only that particular division of Vertebrates, to which Man himself belongs, whose common characteristic, that of suckling their young, is, through the feelings of subjection, reverence and affection it occasions, of the highest value as a means of binding child to parent, man to man, and man to his Maker.
XI. The various species mentioned as the work of the
fifth day, and again those of the sixth day, came forth not
as a motley assemblage simultaneously at the word of
command, but, as already remarked, in long succession.
Guyot, like his friend Agassiz, saw in the facts connected
with this long succession, and in those exhibited by living
species, evidence of a development, or gradual unfolding,
of the kingdoms of life. He found this evidence in the
general rise in grade of species from the simple begin-
nings of early time to the crowning species, Man. He
found it, further, in the many examples of two or three
lines of species divaricating off from so-called comprehen-
sive or composite types, like the forkings from a single
stem. Agassiz called the types at the head or source of
such forkings synthetic types; and Guvot (Objecting to the
term "synthetic " because it implies a putting together of
what was previously separate) denominated them undi-
vided types, or types that were to be divided in the course
of future progress. He found, following his friend, still
more striking evidence of development in Agassiz's dis-
covery that a very close parallelism existed, in numerous
cases through all departments of living species, between
the successive kinds of life in the geological series and
the successive forms in the stages of development of
single living species, so that the successive adult forms of
the young (or early) world were like the successive young
forms in the development of a living species. For exam-
ple, in Crustaceans, or the group to which the Crab, Lob-
ster, and Shrimp belong, the species of early time are
very much like the younger stages of some of these mod-
ern species. Thus there was a degree of parallelism
between the development of the long succession of spe-
cies and development from the germ of a single high
grade species of later time. No principle worked out by
his studies called forth from Agassiz greater enthusiasm
and eloquence than this last; and none led him so posi-
tively to the belief that, in his searchings and discoveries
of law and system in nature, he was studying "the
thoughts of God," or, in the words of Guyot, "the will or purpose of God." The principle is now universally recognized among biologists, and has become a means of reading the past. To the ordinary eye the coiled shell of a Nautilus or Ammonite is a shell more or less smooth and pretty, large or small. To one who has learned to read nature, as has been pointed out by Flyatt, it is an historical roll: the inner coil, simple in form, being the shell of the youngest stage in its development; the successive coils, of varying form and adornment, that of the successive stages, one after another, toward the adult stage. And, further, the first stage reveals much as to the early forms in the geological history of the type, and the following, of later forms in the chronological succession. This is an example under the principle of parallelism between the stages of embryonic development and the stages in the earth's life-development.

To the minds of Agassiz and Guyot, thus taught by nature and to that also of the writer,—the hand of God did not appear to be lifted from his works by such truths. They held that the development was carried forward by the Creator, and, looked upon each successive species as existing by his creating act. God was not only at the head as the source of power, but also in every movement, and *creatively* in each new step of progress. And how much more God-like is such a system of development than the making of the fifth-day motley assemblage of life at the spoken word!

The very words in the first chapter of Genesis, as Guyot observes, sustain this interpretation. Nowhere is there taught that abrupt creation of species which prejudging exegesis so generally finds. The narrative reads, with reference to plants, "Let the earth bring forth"; not let certain kinds, or all kinds, of plants exist; but "Let the earth bring forth"; and the creation begun in the fiat on the third day was continued on afterward, through the earth's period of growth and development. So, again,
with regard to the lower animals, with fishes, reptiles, and flying things, it says "Let the waters brink forth," instituting thus a course of development, and not fixing its limits; and conforming in the command "Let the waters" to the geological fact that the earliest animal species were all of the waters, and a great part of those that followed these throughout Paleozoic time. Further, on the sixth day, it reads, "Let the earth bring forth," although the species were of the highest class of the animal kingdom, --that of Mammals.

Gradual development is thus the doctrine of the chapter, as it is of nature. Modern science teaches what the Bible, in its opening chapter on cosmogony, first taught. Agassiz believed it; and still he was, to the end of his life, a believer, also, in the creation of each species by a divine act.

X11. Does the chapter on cosmogony in the Bible teach the direct creation of each species by a divine act? We look in vain for any definite statement on this important subject in connection with the works of the third, fifth, or sixth days, with the exception of the work of the latter half of the sixth clay, the creation of Man. The expressions "Let the waters bring forth," "Let the earth bring forth," "and the following expression, "God made," do not imply that a divine act was required for each species they teach definitely that, man excepted, only three fiats were required for all the various and immensely numerous species that have existed in past time. And in this feature the first chapter of Genesis is like the rest of the Bible.

The question is thus left an open one, to be decided, if decided at all, by the study of existing life and that of the past. Considering, then that the fact is not decided by the Bible, and in view of the readings of nature that have been made of late years by many investigators, Professor Guyot admits in his recent work that the question remains open. He observes that the use of the Hebrew
word *bara*, translated *created*, on three occasions, and three only, in the chapter,—the first at the creation of matter, the second at the creation of animal life, and the third at the creation of Man,—teaches that these events were distinct creations, that is, demanded divine intervention; and that evolution from matter into life, from animal life into the spiritual life of man, is impossible; but adds with reference to the rest of the work of creation, "the question of evolution of matter into various forms of matter; of life, into the various forms of life, and of mankind into all its varieties, remains still open."

This was not the early view of Professor Guyot nor that of the writer. It was slowly reached by us both and only after an accumulation of facts by science—with regard to the wide varieties of existing species, the relations of varieties to physical conditions over the globe and the consequent gradations of forms, and the gradations of existing species in some cases into those of the preceding geological age, together with other paleontological discoveries—had made the argument: for the development or unfolding of the systems of life, before held, an argument for development through some natural method under "the constant and indispensable supervision of God over the work." We both hold that this natural method is at present only very imperfectly understood, and may always be so.

The idea of gradual development pervades the Mosaic narrative from beginning to end. The creation of light is not the creation of an elemental substance or property, but the imparting of forces to the particles of matter and thus initiating change and progress. The dividing of the "waters from the waters" was not the creation of any particular substance or condition, but the carrying forward of the development of the universe by movements of rotation and systems of divisions and combinations, under the law of gravitation and other molecular laws, until suns and worlds had been evolved, and, among
the worlds, the Earth. The gathering of the waters into one place and the appearing of the dry land was not the sudden creation of dry land, but a further carrying on of changes until the molten earth had become covered with the condensed waters, and had at last its seas and continents: not its finished continents, for the fiat is simply a beginning of work that was to be completed, as in other cases, in future ages.

Thus the inorganic history in the narrative is like the organic. If Professor Guyot accepts of the nebular theory in his system it is because the early part of the chapter not only is unintelligible without it, but actually teaches it. Thus science explains and illumines the inspired narrative, and exalts our conceptions of the grand events announced. Thus, also, the sacred record manifests its divine origin in its concordance with the latest readings of nature.

XIII. Of the last work, the sacred record says, "God created Man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Three times this strong affirmation is repeated in the announcement, and three times "the potent word" bara is used. Man's commission, as sent forth, was "subdue" "and have dominion," in which all nature was placed at his feet; and being made in the image of God, he was capable of moral distinctions and of spiritual progress. He was thus above nature, while of nature. "With him begins the age of moral freedom and responsibility, that of the historical world."

Science has made no real progress toward proving that the divine act was not required for the creation of Man. No remains of ancient man have been found that are of lower grade than the lowest of existing tribes; none that show any less of the erect posture and of other characteristics of the exalted species.

XIV. The words closing the verses on the sixth day are; “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” The chapter opens with the words,
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; "and this verse announces the finishing of "the heavens and the earth," a comprehensive expression which throws light on the meaning of the first announcement and of those which follow it.

XV. "Now begins the seventh day, the day of rest, or the sabbath of the earth"--the day now in progress which has not yet reached its evening, in which God's "work is one of love to man, the redemption;" the creation of "the new man, born anew of the Spirit, in the heart of the natural man."

Parallel with the week of Creation, Man, a being of a few short years, has his week; and, by God's appointment, as well as Nature's need, his seventh day of rest--"of rest" from daily toil, but of activity in the higher world of the spirit."

"Such is the grand cosmogonic week described by Moses," says Guyot in his concluding remarks. I have found, as years have passed since that conversation in August, 1850, no reason to change my estimate of Professor Guyot's exposition of Genesis, unless it be that I give it, with small exceptions, fuller concurrence, and find higher satisfaction in its teachings. Every feature in it, its spirit, its philosophy, its sufficiency as an interpretation of the sacred text, its consistency with the demands of sciences commends it.

The appeal to nature-science which has here been made in order to sustain an interpretation of a chapter in the Bible will be to the scientific exegete--or rather to some such--another profane effort, though "of pious intent," to set aside the claims of the science of hermeneutics," calling for another "warning of the readers of this noble little volume"--to which will now be added "the excellent BIBLIOTHECA SACRA." But this way of warning the world against the mistakes of science, without knowing the difference between its truths and errors, is an unrighteous course. It is unrighteous, because its
charges are ignorantly made; and also because what there is of truth in science is truth from, a divine source, as strictly so as that of the Bible; and, thirdly, because it does harm to the cause of truth and not good.

To aid the reader in studying up science enough to make himself a judge of the scientific facts fundamental to the interpretations, I here give a brief review of these facts.

I. For the law as to the basis of light, see any text-book on Physics. The existence of the ether in space is a fact now experimentally established. Not only have the wave-lengths for the different parts of the spectrum been determined with great accuracy, but also octaves in the wave-lengths corresponding to octaves in sound-vibrations; for, although the luminous part of the solar spectrum embraces a little less than one octave, the spectrum has been studied for about four octaves beyond the red end, and one beyond the violet.

2. The melted condition of the earth when first a sphere in space is not doubted by geologists, all geological and astronomical facts favoring the conclusion.

3. The temperature at the earth's surface when molten was above 2,000° Fahrenheit, as proved by the fusing temperature of rocks. As a consequence, the ocean's waters, equivalent in volume to a layer of water 1,000 feet deep over the whole earth's surface, were then in a state of dense vapor about the sphere; and so was all else of the surface material that was vaporizable at that temperature. Since a cubic inch of water makes, under ordinary pressure and temperature, a cubic foot of steam, the envelope of vapor, atmosphere, and other gases was of great thickness and density. The water-vapor began to condense at a temperature above the ordinary boiling point, because, as experiment has shown, this temperature varies with pressure; and under the heavy pressure of the superincumbent ocean of vapors and atmosphere, the temperature at which the ocean would have begun to be made from the deposition of water, would have been, according to one estimate, 600° Fahrenheit.

4. Rapid evaporation goes on not only at the boiling temperature, but also at temperatures much below it. While hot, the clouds must have made a continuous envelope about the sphere, which cooling would finally have broken up and removed.

5. Plants live on mineral matter, and animals not--a fact well established; and hence the animal kingdom is dependent on the vegetable kingdom for its existence.

6. Plants of the lower tribes survive in waters whose temperature is as high as 200° Fahrenheit, and some are not destroyed at a temperature of 220° Fahrenheit.
7. The question as to a genetic relation between the lowest animals and lowest plants is not yet positively decided by observation; for some biologists hold that the two kingdoms graduate into one another through intermediate species; and that although the lowest plants may have long preceded the lowest animals, the latter were a gradual development from the former. This is far from proved. The grand distinctive fact, that animals are self-conscious, or conscious of the outer world, know, avoid obstacles in locomotion, is strikingly true of the lower of the simple Rhizopods, which are species of the lowest division of the animal kingdom, as is well shown by Leidy. The claim is made only for the very lowest of this low group, which are yet doubtful things.  

8. The first dry land of the globe appeared in what is called by geologists, The Archaean era. The position of the part over the American Continent is well known, and these positions indicate the form and location of the finished continent. Mountains existed over them, and among these oldest mountains of the oldest dry land are the Adirondacks, and the Highlands of New Jersey. The best part of the evidence with regard to the existence of plants in this era is stated on page 213. The existence of the lower of animal species during the later part of the era is yet unproved.

9. Aquatic invertebrate animals were, the earliest of animal species, according to the testimony from fossils in the earth's rocks. Fishes come next in order; then Amphibians; then Reptiles. All these tribes were represented by species before the earliest of Mammals appeared. The existence of Birds before the earliest Mammals is not proved, though believed by some paleontologists on probable evidence. The early Mammals were Marsupials (like the Opossum and Kangaroo) and lived in the era called by Agassiz "The Age of Reptiles." True Mammals came into geological history in the Tertiary era, very long after the appearance of the first Birds, and they so far characterize the era that Agassiz called it " The Age of Mammals.

Man was the last of the series. It is not established that his bones or relics occur as far back as the Tertiary era.

10. The facts with regard to system, development-like, in the order of succession in the plants and animals of geological history are not doubted by

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1 Dr. Leidy says, in his large, finely illustrated work on the Fresh-water Rhizopods of North America (2379), after alluding to the absence of a mouth and stomach: " Without trace of nerve elements and without definite fixed organs of any kinds internal or external, the Rhizopod—simplest of all animals, a mere jelly speck—moves about with the apparent purposes of more complex creatures. It selects and swallows its appropriate food, digests it and rejects the insoluble remains. It grows and reproduces its kind. It evolves a wonderful variety of distinctive forms, often of the utmost beauty; and indeed it altogether exhibits such marvelous attributes that one is led to ask the question, In what consists the superiority of animals usually regarded as much higher in the scale of life?"
any geologist or naturalist. Whether the development went forward without divine intervention for each species, in accordance with some theory of evolution, is a question about which there is disagreement.

No other facts from geology or the other nature-sciences are fundamental to the explanation, though all that are known may be used in its illustration. Geologists differ as to the present condition of the earth's interior; yet would not do this long if they could get down there for a look; the fact whether now liquid or not has nothing to do with the interpretation of Genesis. They differ as to theories of mountain-making; but opinions on this point do not affect the interpretation. And so it is with other unsettled points in geology; they have no fundamental bearing on the interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis.

Geologists vary much as to their views on this chapter; and some will take it literally, affirming that it is a mere fable, no better than other fables in ancient history. We would ask of all such (as well as of the nature-doubting exegete) a reconsideration of the question; and if they have doubts with regard to the authenticity of the Bible itself, they may perhaps be led, after a fair examination of the narrative, and a consideration of the coincidences between its history and the history of the earth derived from nature, to acknowledge a divine origin for both; and to recognize the fact that in this Introductory chapter its Divine author gives the fullest endorsement of the Book which is so prefaced. It is his own inscription on the Title Page.

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THE THEOLOGY OF SEXUALITY IN THE BEGINNING: GENESIS 1-2

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The first two chapters of the Bible deal directly with the question of human sexuality. Not only is human sexuality presented as a basic fact of creation, but an elucidation of the nature of sexuality constitutes a central part of the Creation accounts. These opening chapters of Scripture, coupled with the portrayal of disruption and divine judgment presented in Gen 3, have been described as of seminal character and determinative for a biblical theology of sexuality. It has been correctly noted that a clear understanding of these basic statements is crucial, since here "the pattern is established and adjudged good. From then until the close of the biblical corpus it is the assumed norm."¹ In this article we will focus upon the theology of sexuality in the creation accounts (Gen 1-2), and in a subsequent article we will explore the theological insights on sexuality emerging from Gen 3.

1. Sexuality in Genesis 1:1-2:4a

In Gen 1:26-28 "the highpoint and goal has been reached toward which all of God's creativity from vs. 1 on was directed."² Here in lofty grandeur is portrayed the creation of man (ha'adam = "humankind"):

26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27 So

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."³

It has been rightly observed that discussion among theologians over this passage has largely focused on the meaning of man's creation in the "image of God" and has almost entirely ignored the further affirmation that humankind is created male and female.⁴ In harmony with the concerns of this study we must focus in particular upon the neglected statement--"male and female he created them"--without ignoring the question of the imago Dei and the wider context of the chapter. The fundamental insights into the theology of human sexuality which emerge from Gen 1:1-2:4a are here discussed under seven major subheadings.

Creation Order

In the clause concerning man's creation as male and female (Gen 1:27c) we note, first of all, that sexual differentiation is presented as a creation by God, and not part of the divine order itself. This emphasis upon the creation of sexual distinction appears to form a subtle but strong polemic against the "'divinisation' of sex"⁵ so common in the thought of Israel's neighbors.

Throughout the mythology of the ancient Near East, the sexual activities of the gods form a dominant motif.⁶ The fertility myth was of special importance, particularly in Mesopotamia and Palestine. In the fertility cults creation was often celebrated as resulting from the union of male and female deities: "Copulation and procreation were mythically regarded as a divine event. Consequently the religious atmosphere was as good as saturated with mythical sexual conceptions."⁷

³ All English renditions of Scripture herein are from the RSV.
⁴ Paul K. Jewett, Man as Male and Female: A Study of Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View (Grand Rapids, MI, 1975), p. 19.
⁷ Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:27.
In contrast to this view of creation as divine procreation, the account of Gen 1, with its emphasis upon the transcendant God (Elohim) and a cosmic view of creation, posits a radical separation of sexuality and divinity. God stands "absolutely beyond the polarity of sex." The sexual distinctions are presented as a creation by God, not part of the divine order.

_A Duality from the Beginning_

Secondly, it may be noted that God created the bipolarity of the sexes from the beginning. The popular idea of an ideal androgynous being later split into two sexes cannot be sustained from the text. Gerhard von Rad correctly points out that "the plural in vs. 27 ('he created them') is intentionally contrasted with the singular ('him') and prevents one from assuming the creation of an originally androgynous man." The sexual distinction between male and female is fundamental to what it means to be human. To be human is to live as a sexual person. As Karl Barth expresses it, "We cannot say man without having to say male or female and also male and female. Man exists in this differentiation, in this duality." Whether or not we agree with Barth that "this is the only structural differentiation in which he [the human being] exists," the sexual distinction is certainly presented in Gen 1 as a basic component in the original creation of humankind.

_Equality of the Sexes_

A third insight into the theology of human sexuality stems from the equal pairing of male and female in parallel with ha-'adam in Gen 1:27. There is no hint of ontological or functional superiority or inferiority between male and female. Both are "equally immediate to the Creator and His act." In the wider context of this passage, both are given the same dominion over the earth and other living creatures (vss. 26 and 28). Both are to share alike in the blessing and responsibility of procreation (vs. 28). In short, both participate equally in the image of God.

8 Ibid.
9 Von Rad, _Genesis_, p. 60.
11 Ibid.
Wholeness

A fourth theological insight will serve to bridge our discussion from "male and female" to the *imago Dei*. In Gen 1:27 the generic term for humankind (*ha'adam*) includes both male and female. "The man and the woman together make man."13 The holistic picture of humankind is only complete when both male and female are viewed together. Such a description points to the individuality and complementarity of the sexes, and will be more fully developed in Gen 2.

Relationship

The existence of the bipolarity of the sexes in creation implies not only wholeness but relationship. The juxtaposition of male and female in Gen 1:26 intimates what will become explicit in Gen 2: the full meaning of human existence is not in male or female in isolation, but in their mutual communion. The notion of male-female fellowship in Gen 1 has been particularly emphasized by Barth, who maintains that the "I-Thou" relationship of male and female is the *essence* of the *imago Dei*. For Barth, Gen 1:27c is the exposition of vs. 27a. and b. Man-in-fellowship as male and female is what it means to be in the image of God.14 Barth's exclusive identification of the sexual distinction with the image of God is too restrictive. Our purpose at this point is not to enter into an extended discussion of the meaning of the *imago Dei*.15 But it may be noted that the Hebrew words *selem* ("Image") and *dēmūt* ("likeness"), although possessing overlapping semantic ranges, in the juxtaposition of vs. 26 appear to emphasize both the concrete and abstract aspects of human beings,16 and together indicate that the person as a whole--both in material/bodily and

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14 Barth's discussion of this point extends through major portions of his Church Dogmatics, vols. 3/1, 3/2, and 3/3. See the helpful summary of his argument in Jewett, pp. 33-48.
spiritual/mental components--is created in God's image. In his commentary on Genesis, von Rad has insightfully concluded with regard to Gen 1:26: "One will do well to split the physical from the spiritual as little as possible: the whole man is created in God's image."\(^\text{17}\)

Von Rad has elsewhere further elucidated the meaning of the *imago Dei* in terms of mankind's dominion over the earth. Just as earthly kings set up images of themselves throughout their kingdom as a "sign of sovereign authority," so in the context of Gen 1:26-28 man is God's representative--his image--to uphold and enforce his claim as sovereign Lord.\(^\text{18}\) If the image of God includes the whole person, and if it involves human dominion over the earth as God's representative, this, does not, however, exclude the aspect of fellowship between male and female emphasized by Barth. The sexual differentiation of male and female (vs. 27c) is not identical to the image of God (vs. 27a-b), as Barth maintains, but the two are brought into so close connection that they should not be separated, as has been done for centuries. The synthetic parallelism of vs. 27c, immediately following the synonymous parallelism of vs. 27a-b, indicates that the *mode* of human existence in the divine image is that of male and female together.\(^\text{19}\)

The aspect of personal relationship between the male and female is further highlighted by the analogy of God's own differentiation and relationship in contemplating the creation of humanity. It is hardly coincidental that only once in the creation account of Genesis--only in Gen 1:26--does God speak of himself in the plural: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." There have been many attempts to account for this use of the plural, but the explanation that appears most consonant with both the immediate context and the analogy of Scripture identifies this usage as a plural of fullness. The "let us" as a plural of fullness "supposes that there is within the divine Being the distinction of personalities" and expresses "all intra-divine deliberation among 'persons' within the divine Being."\(^\text{20}\)


\(^{17}\) Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 58.


\(^{19}\) See the argumentation for this point in Jewett, p. 45, and passim.

The juxtaposition of the plurality of the divine "let us" in vs. 26 with the plurality of the "them" (male and female) in vss. 26-28 is not without significance. Karl Barth appears to be right in his contention that a correspondence or analogy is intended "between this mark of the divine being, namely, that it includes an I and a Thou, and the being of man, male and female."21 The statement of this correspondence "preserves with exceeding care the otherness of God,"22 precluding any notion of the bisexuality of God, and yet at the same time underscores the profound importance of the personal relationship and mutuality of communion in human existence as male and female. Just as there takes place in the divine being deliberating over humankind's creation--"the differentiation and relationship, the loving coexistence and co-operation, the I and Thou"23--, so the same are to be found in the product of God's crowning creative work.

Procreation

It is clear from Gen 1:28 that one of the primary purposes of sexuality is procreation, as indicated in the words "Be fruitful and multiply." But what is particularly noteworthy is that human procreativity "is not here understood as an emanation or manifestation of his [the human being's] creation in God's image." Rather, human procreative ability "is removed from God's image and shifted to a special word of blessing."24 This separation of the imago Dei and procreation probably serves as a polemic against the mythological understanding and orgiastic celebration of divine sexual activity. But at the same time a profound insight into the theology of human sexuality is provided.

Procreation is shown to be part of the divine design for human sexuality--as a special added blessing. This divine blessing/command is to be taken seriously and acted upon freely and responsibly in the power that attends God's blessing.25 But sexuality cannot be

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21 Barth, 3/1:196.
22 Trible, p. 21.
23 Barth, 3/1:196.
24 Von Rad, Genesis, pp. 60-61.
25 The Hebrew word for "bless" (berak) in Gen 1 implies the power to accomplish the task which God has set forth in the blessing. See Josef Scharbert, "117
wholly subordinated to the intent to propagate children. Sexual differentiation has meaning apart from the procreative purpose. The procreative blessing is also pronounced upon the birds and fish on the fifth day (vs. 22), but only man is made in the image of God. Gen 1 emphasizes that the sexual distinction in humankind is created by God particularly for fellowship, for relationship, between male and female. This will become even more apparent in Gen 2, where the motif of relationship dominates and procreation is not mentioned at all.

Wholesomeness and Beauty

A final insight from Gen I into the theology of human sexuality emerges from God's personal assessment of his creation. According to vs. 31, when "God saw everything he had made"--including the sexuality of his crowning work of creation--"behold! it was very good." The Hebrew expression tob m’od ("very good") connotes the quintessence of goodness, wholesomeness, appropriateness, beauty. The syllogism is straightforward. Sexuality (including the act of sexual intercourse) is part of God's creation, part of his crowning act. And God's creation is very good. Therefore, declares the first chapter of Genesis, sex is good, very good. It is not a mistake, a sinful aberration, a "regrettable necessity," a shameful experience, as it has so often been regarded in the history of Christian as well as pagan thought. Rather, human sexuality (as both an ontological state and a relational experience) is divinely inaugurated: it is part of God's perfect design from the beginning and willed as a fundamental aspect of human existence.

It is not within the scope of this study to draw out the full range of philosophical and sociological implications that follow from the theology of human sexuality set forth in Gen 1. Perhaps it may suffice to repeat again the central clause--"male and female created he them"--and then exclaim with Emil Brunner:


26 BDB, pp. 373-375; Andrew Bowlings, "תוב (tob)," in R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago, 1980), 1:345-346 [hereafter cited as TWOT].

27 Harry Hollis, Jr., Thank God for Sex: A Christian Model for Sexual Understanding and Behavior (Nashville, TN, 1975), p. 58. (This is Hollis' phrase, but not his view.)
That is the immense double statement, of a lapidary simpli-
city, so simple indeed that we hardly realize that with it a vast
world of myth and Gnostic speculation, of cynicism and asceti-
cism, of the deification of sexuality and fear of sex completely
disappears.28

2. Sexuality in Genesis 2:4b-25

In the narrative of Gen 2:4b-25 many of the insights from Gen
I into the theology of human sexuality are reinforced and further
illuminated, while new vistas of the profound nature of sexual
relationships also appear.29

Creation Order

The accounts of creation in Gen 1 and Gen 2 concur in
assigning sexuality to the creation order and not to the divine
realm. But while Gen 1 does not indicate the precise manner in
which God created, Gen 2 removes any possible lingering thoughts
that creation occurred by divine procreation. In this second chapter
of Scripture is set forth in detail God's personal labor of love,
forming man from the dust of the ground and "building"30 woman
from one of the man's ribs.

Androgyny or Duality from the Beginning

Some recent studies have revived an older theory that the
original ha'adam described in Gen 2:7-22 was "a sexually undiffer-

29 Weighty evidence presented by several recent seminal studies points to the
conclusion that the first two chapters of Genesis do not represent separate and
disparate sources as argued by proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis. See
especially Jacques Doukhan, The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure,
Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 5 (Berrien Springs,
MI, 1978). Doukhan's literary/structural analysis shows that instead of comprising
multiple sources, Gen 1-2 provides a unified dual perspective on Creation-and on
the God of Creation. In Gen 1:1-2:4a we find the picture of an all-powerful,
transcendent God (Elohim) and a cosmic view of Creation. In Gen 2:4b-25, God is
further presented as the personal, caring, covenant God (Yahweh Elohim), with
Creation described in terms of man and his intimate, personal needs. From this
unique dual perspective of infinite/personal God and cosmic/man-centered creation
emerges a balanced and enriched presentation of the divine design for human
sexuality.
30 See below, pp. 16-17.
entiated earth creature,"\textsuperscript{31}" or "basically androgynous: one creature incorporating two sexes."\textsuperscript{32} But such an hypothesis is not supported by the text. According to Gen 2:7, 8, 15, 16 what God creates before woman is called ha'adam "the man." After the creation of woman, this creature is denoted by the same term (vss. 22-23). Nothing has changed in the makeup of "the man" during his sleep except the loss of a rib. There is no hint in the text of any division of an originally bisexual or sexually undifferentiated being into two different sexes. It should be concluded that ha'adam, "the man" formed before woman, was not originally androgyous, but was "created in anticipation of the future."\textsuperscript{33} He was created with those sexual drives toward union with his counterpart. This becomes apparent in the man's encounter with the animals which dramatically points up his need of "a helper fit for him" or "corresponding to him" (vss. 18, 20). Such a need is satisfied when he is introduced to woman and he fully realizes his sexuality vis-a-vis his sexual complement.

Equality or Hierarchy of the Sexes

The one major question which has dominated the scholarly discussion of sexuality in Gen 2 concerns the relative status of the sexes. Does Gen 2 affirm the equality of the sexes, or does it support a hierarchical view in which man is in some way superior to the woman or given headship over woman at creation. Over the centuries, the preponderance of commentators on Gen 2 have espoused the hierarchical interpretation, and this view has been reaffirmed in a number of recent scholarly studies.\textsuperscript{34} The main elements of the narrative which purportedly prove a divinely-ordained hierarchical

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Trible, p. 80.
\item \textsuperscript{32} United Church of Christ, Human Sexuality: A Preliminary Study of the United Church of Christ (New York, 1977), p. 57.
\item \textsuperscript{33} C. F. Kell, The First Book of Moses (Grand Rapids, MI, 1919), p. 88.
view of the sexes may be summarized as follows: (a) man is created first and woman last (2:7, 22), and the first is superior and the last is subordinate or inferior; (b) woman is formed for the sake of man--to be his "helpmate" or assistant to cure man's loneliness (vss. 18-20); (c) woman comes out of man (vss. 21-22), which implies a derivative and subordinate position; (d) woman is created from man's rib (vss. 21-22), which indicates her dependence upon him for life; and (e) the man names the woman (vs. 23), which indicates his power and authority over her.

Do these points really substantiate a hierarchical view of the sexes? Or is Phyllis Trible correct in asserting that "although such specifics continue to be cited as support for traditional interpretations of male superiority and female inferiority, not one of them is altogether accurate and most of them are simply not present in the story itself."35 Let us look at each point in turn.

First, because man is created first and then woman, it has been asserted that "by this the priority and superiority of the man, and the dependence of the woman upon the man, are established as an ordinance of divine creation."36 But a careful examination of the literary structure of Gen 2 reveals that such a conclusion does not follow from the fact of man's prior creation. Hebrew literature often makes use of an inclusio device in which the points of central concern to a unit are placed at the beginning and end of the unit.37 This is the case in Gen 2. The entire account is cast in the form of an inclusio or "ring construction"38 in which the creation of man at the beginning of the narrative and the creation of woman at the end of the narrative correspond to each other in importance. The movement in Gen 2 is not from superior to inferior, but from


35 Trible, p. 73.
36 Keil, p. 89.
38 Muilenberg, p. 9.
incompleteness to completeness. Woman is created as the climax, the culmination of the story. She is the crowning work of creation.

If a hierarchy of the sexes is not implied in the order of their creation, is such indicated by the purpose of woman's creation, as is suggested in a second major argument for the hierarchical interpretation? Gen 2:18 records the Lord's deliberation: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him 'ezer k'negdo [KJV, "a help meet for him"]; RSV, "a helper fit for him"; NASB, a helper suitable to him"; NIV, "a helper suitable for him"]."

The Hebrew words 'ezer k'negdo have often been taken to imply the inferiority or subordinate status of woman. For example, John Calvin understood from this phrase that woman was a "faithful assistant" for man.39 But this is not the meaning conveyed by these terms!

The word 'ezer is usually translated as "help" or "helper" in English. This, however, is a misleading translation because the English word "helper" tends to suggest one who is an assistant, a subordinate, an inferior, whereas the Hebrew 'ezer carries no such connotation. In fact, the Hebrew Bible most frequently employs 'ezer to describe a superior helper--God himself as the "helper" of Israel.40 The word can also be used with reference to man or animals.41 It is a relational term, describing a beneficial relationship, but in itself does not specify position or rank, either superiority or inferiority.42 The specific position intended must be gleaned from the immediate context. In the case of Gen 2:18 and 20, such position is shown by the word which adjoins 'ezer, namely k'negdo.

The word neged conveys the idea of "in front of" or "counter-part," and a literal translation of k'negdo is thus "like his counterpart, corresponding to him."43 Used with 'ezer, this term

40 Exod 18:1; Deut 33:7; 26; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, 10, 11.
41 Isa 30:5; Hos 13:9; Gen 2:20.
42 R. David Freedman, "Woman. A Power Equal to Man," *BARev* (1983):56-58, argues that the Hebrew word 'ezer etymologically derives from the merger of two Semitic roots, "zr, "to save, rescue," and gzr, "to be strong," and in this passage has reference to the latter: woman is (reated. like the man, "a power (or strength) superior to the animals.
indicates no less than equality: Eve is Adam's "benefactor/helper," one who in position is "corresponding to him," "his counterpart, his complement." Eve is "a power equal to man;" she is Adam's "partner."

As a third alleged indication in Gen 2 of male superiority and female subordination, it has been argued that since woman came out of man, since she was formed from man, therefore she has a derivative existence, a dependent and subordinate status. That her existence was in some way "derived" from Adam cannot be denied. But derivation does not imply subordination! The text indicates this in several ways. We note, for example, that Adam also was "derived"-from the ground (vs. 7)--but certainly we are not to conclude that the ground was his superior! Again, woman is not Adam's rib. It was the raw material, not woman, that was taken out of man, just as the raw material of man was "taken" (Gen 3:19, 23) out of the ground. What is more, Samuel Terrien rightly points out that woman "is not simply molded of clay, as man was, but she is architecturally ‘built' (2:33)." The verb bnh "to build," used in the creation account only with regard to the formation of Eve, "suggests an aesthetic intent and connotes also the idea of reliability and permanence." To clinch the point, the text explicitly indicates that the man was asleep while God created woman. Man had no active part in the creation of woman that might allow him to claim to be her superior.

A fourth argument used to support the hierarchical view of the sexes concerns the woman's creation from Adam's rib. But the very symbolism of the rib points to equality and not hierarchy. The word sela' can mean either "side" or "rib." Since sela' occurs in

44 Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:149.
45 Freedman, pp. 56-58. Freedman notes that in later Mishnaic Hebrew k'neged clearly means "equal," and in light of various lines of biblical philological evidence he forcefully argues that the phrase ‘ezer k'negdo here should be translated "a power equal to him."
46 Ibid, p. 56; Gen 2:18, NEB.
49 BDB, p. 854. Numerous theories have been propounded to explain the meaning of the rib in this story: e.g., J. Boehmer, "Die geschlechtliche Stellung des Weibes in
the plural in vs. 21 and God is said to take "one of " them, the reference in this verse is probably to a rib from Adam's side. By "building" Eve from one of Adam's ribs, God appears to be indicating the mutual relationship, the "singleness of life," the "inseparable unity" in which man and woman are joined. The rib "means solidarity and equality." Created from Adam's "side [rib]," Eve was formed to stand by his side as an equal. Peter Lombard was not off the mark when he said: "Eve was not taken from the feet of Adam to be his slave, nor from his head to be his ruler, but from his side to be his beloved partner." This interpretation appears to be further confirmed by the man's poetic exclamation when he saw the woman for the first time (vs. 23): "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"! The phrase "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" indicates that the person described is "as close as one's own body." It denotes physical oneness and a "commonality of concern, loyalty, and responsibility." Much can be deduced from this expression regarding the nature of sexuality, as we shall see below, but the expression certainly does not lead to the notion of woman's subordination.

Gen 2 and 3, "Monatschrift fur Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums" 79 (1939):292, suggests that the "rib" is a euphemism for the birth canal which the male lacks; P. Humbert, Etudes sur le recit du Paradis (Neuchatel, 1910), pp. 57-58 proposes that the mention of the "rib" explains the existence of the navel in Adam: and von Rad, Genesis, p. 89, finds the detail of the rib answering the question why ribs cover the upper but not the lower part of the body. Such suggestions appear to miss the overall context of the passage with its emphasis upon the relations/tip between man and woman.

50 Westermann, p. 230.
51 Collins, p. 153. It may be that the Sumerian language retains the memory of the close relationship between "rib" and "life," for the Sumerian sign it signifies both "life" and "rib." See S. N. Kramer, History Begins at Sumer (Garden City, NY, 1959), p. 136. This is not to say, however, that the detail of the rib in Gen 2 has its origin in Sumrian mythology. The story of creation in Gen 2 and the Sumerian myth in which the pun between the "lady of the rib" and "lady who makes live" appears (ANET, pp. 37-41), have virtually nothing in common.
52 Keil, p. 89.
54 Quoted in Stuart B. Babbage. Christianity) and Sex (Chicago, 1963), p. 10. A similar statement is attributed to other writers as well.
56 Walter Brueggemann, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gen 2:23a)," CBQ 32 (1970):5.10.
The last major argument used to support a hierarchical view of the sexes in Gen 2 is that in man's naming of woman (vs. 23) is implied man's power, authority, and superiority over her. It is true that assigning names in Scripture often does signify authority over the one named. But such is not the case in Gen 2:23. In the first place, the word "woman" (‘issah) is not a personal name, but only a generic identification. This is verified in vs. 24, which indicates that a man is to cleave to his ‘issah ("wife"), and further substantiated in Gen 3:20, which explicitly records the man's naming of Eve only after the Fall.

Moreover, Jacques Doukhan has shown that Gen 2:23 contains a pairing of "divine passives," indicating that the designation of "woman" comes from God, not man. Just as in the past, woman "was taken out of man" by God, an action with which the man had nothing to do (he had been put into a "deep sleep"), so in the future she "shall be called woman," a designation originating in God and not man. Doukhan also indicates how the literary structure of the Genesis Creation story confirms this interpretation. The wordplay in 2:23 between 'is (man) and 'issah (wo-man) and the explanation of the woman's being taken out of man are not given to buttress a hierarchical view of the sexes, but rather to underscore man's joyous recognition of his second self. In his ecstatic poetic utterance, the man is not determining who the woman is, but delighting in what God has done. He is saying "yes" to God in recognizing and welcoming woman as the equal counterpart to his sexuality.

In light of the foregoing discussion, I conclude that there is nothing in Gen 2 to indicate a hierarchical view of the sexes. The man and woman before the Fall are presented as fully equal, with men's exercise of a sovereign right over a person, see 2 Kgs 23:34; 24:17; Dan 1:7. Cf. R. Abba, "Name," *IDB*, 3:502.


no hint of a headship of one over the other or a hierarchical relationship between husband and wife.

*Sexuality as Wholeness*

Both the first and second chapters of Genesis affirm the attribute of wholeness in the human sexual experience. But in Gen 2 we encounter a twofold amplification of the meaning of sexual wholeness. First, Gen 2:7 articulates a holistic view of man. According to the understanding of anthropology set forth in this verse, man does not *have* a soul, he is a soul. He is a living being, a psychophysical unity.60 There is no room in such a view for a Platonic/Philonic dichotomy of body and soul. Excluded is the dualistic notion of the ascetics that the body is evil and therefore all expressions of the body pleasures—including sexual expressions—are contaminated.

The holistic view of man presented in Gen 2:7 means that human sexuality cannot be compartmentalized into "the things of the body" versus "the things of the spirit/soul." The human being is a sexual creature, and his/her sexuality is manifested in every aspect of human existence.

The meaning of wholeness is also amplified in Gen 2 with regard to the differentiation between the sexes. Whereas from Gen 1 it was possible to conclude in a general way that both male and female are equally needed to make up the image of God, from Gen 2 we can say more precisely that it is in "creative complementariness"61 that God designed male and female to participate in this wholeness. Gen 2 opens with the creation of man. But creation is not finished. The man is alone, he is incomplete. And this is "not good" (vs. 18). Man needs an 'ezer k'negdo—a helper/ benefactor who is his counterpart. Thus begins man's quest to satisfy his God-instilled "hunger for wholeness."62 Such hunger is not satisfied by his animal companions but by the sexual being God has "built" ("aesthetically designed") to be alongside him as his complement. Adam in effect exclaims at his first sight of Eve, "At last, I am whole! Here is the complement of myself!" He recognizes,

61 Terrien, p. 18.
and the narrative instructs us, that "man is whole only in his complementarity with another being who is like unto himself."63

A Multi-dimensional Relationship

Closely connected with "complementary wholeness" is the idea of relationship. If Gen 1 whispers that human sexuality is for fellowship, for relationship, Gen 2 orchestrates this fact with a volume of double forte, and the melody and harmony of the narrative portray richness and beauty in the relational symphony of the sexes.

According to Gen 2, the creation of Eve takes place in the context of loneliness. The keynote is struck in vs. 18: "It is not good that the man should be alone...." The "underlying idea" of vss. 18-24 is that "sexuality finds its meaning not in the appropriation of divine creative powers, but in human sociality."64 Man is a social being; sexuality is for sociality, for relationship, companionship, partnership. In principle, this passage may be seen to affirm the various mutual social relationships that should take place between the sexes (as is also true with the "image-of-God" passage in Gen 1); but more specifically, the Genesis account links the concept of sociality to the marriage relationship. This is apparent from 2:24: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." The introductory "therefore" indicates that the relationship of Adam and Eve is upheld as the ideal for all future human sexual relationships. Certain significant insights into the nature of sexuality call for attention in this verse.

First, man leaves. The word 'azab is a forceful term. It means literally "to abandon, forsake," and is employed frequently to describe Israel's forsaking of Yahweh for false gods.65 The "leaving" of Gen 2:24 indicates the necessity of absolute freedom from outside interferences in the sexual relationship. Barth has pointed out that in a very real sense Gen 2 represents the "Old Testament Magna Charta of humanity" as Adam was allowed freely and exuberantly

64 Ibid.
65 See BDB, pp. 736-737; Deut 28:20; Judg 10:13; 2 Chron 34:25; Isa 1:4; etc.
to recognize and affirm the woman as his partner.\textsuperscript{66} Just as this freedom was essential in the Garden, so it is crucial in all succeeding sexual relationships.

What is particularly striking in vs. 24 is that it is the man who is to "leave." It was a matter of course in the patriarchal society at the time Gen 2 was penned that the wife left her mother and father. But for the husband to "leave" was revolutionary.\textsuperscript{67} In effect, the force of this statement is that both are to leave—to cut loose from those ties that would encroach upon the independence and freedom of the relationship.

Second, man cleaves. The Hebrew verb \textit{dabaq}, "cleave," is another robust term, signifying "strong personal attachment."\textsuperscript{68} It is often used as a technical covenant term for the permanent bond of Israel to the Lord.\textsuperscript{69} As applied to the relationship between the sexes in Gen 2:24, it seems clearly to indicate a covenant context, i.e., a marriage covenant, paralleling the "oath of solidarity" and language of "covenant partnership" expressed by Adam to Eve.\textsuperscript{70} But as was true with Adam, more is involved here than a formal covenant. The word \textit{dabaq} especially emphasizes the inward attitudinal dimensions of the covenant bond. It "implies a devotion and an unshakable faith between humans; it connotes a permanent attraction which transcends genital union to which, nonetheless, it gives meaning."\textsuperscript{71}

Third, man and woman "become one flesh." We may immediately point out that this "one-flesh" union follows the "cleaving" and thus comes within the context of the marriage covenant. The unitive purpose of sexuality is to find fulfillment inside the marital relationship. Furthermore, the phrase "man and his wife"--with

\textsuperscript{66} Barth, 3/2:291.
\textsuperscript{67} Some leave seen behind this passage a hint of a matriarchal social structure, but evidence for such an hypothesis is not convincing. For further discussion of this theory, see Jewett, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{70} For discussion of the covenant language used by Adam, see Brueggemann, pp., 532-542.
\textsuperscript{71} Collins, p. 153.
both nouns in the singular—clearly implies that the sexual relationship envisioned is a monogamous one, to be shared exclusively between two marriage partners. The LXX translation makes this point explicit: "they two shall become one flesh."

The "one-flesh" relationship certainly involves the sexual union; sexual intercourse. The physical act of coitus may even be in view in this passage as the primary means of establishing the "innermost mystery"72 of oneness. But this is by no means all that is included. The term basar, "flesh," in the OT refers not only to one's physical body but to a person's whole existence in the world.73 By "one flesh" is thus connoted "mutual dependence and reciprocity in all areas of life,"74 a "unity that embraces the natural lives of two persons in their entirety."75 It indicates a oneness and intimacy in the total relationship of the whole person of the husband to the whole person of the wife.76

Sexuality for Procreation

With regard to Gen 1 we noted that a primary purpose of sexuality was for personal relationship, and that procreation was presented as a special added blessing. The significance of the unitive purpose of sexuality is highlighted in Gen 2 by the complete absence of any reference to the propagation of children. This omission is not to deny the importance of procreation (as becomes apparent in later chapters of Scripture). But by the "full-stop"77 after "one-flesh" in vs. 24, sexuality is given independent meaning and value. It does not need to be justified only as a means to a superior end, i.e., procreation.

The Wholesomeness of Sexuality

The narrative of Gen 2 highlights the divine initiative and approbation in the relationship of the sexes. After the formation of

72 Otto Piper, *The Biblical View of Sex and Marriage* (New York, 1960), pp. 52-67, explores the possible dimensions of this "inner mystery."
74 Piper, p. 28.
75 Ibid., p. 25.
woman, the Lord God "brought her to the man" (vs. 22). The Creator Himself, as it were, celebrated the first marriage.\footnote{See Brueggemann, pp. 538-542, for evidence for linguistic and contextual indications of a covenant-making ceremony.} Thus, the "very good" which is pronounced upon humankind and human sexuality in Gen 1 is in Gen 2 concretized in the divine solemnization of the "one-flesh" union between husband and wife.

Sexuality is wholesome because it is inaugurated by God himself. Since the inauguration occurs within the context of a divine-human relationship, sexuality must be seen to encompass not only horizontal (human) but also vertical (spiritual) dimensions. According to the divine design, the sexual relationship between husband and wife is inextricably bound up with the spiritual unity of both man and woman with their Creator.

A final word on God's Edenic ideal for sexuality comes in vs. 25: "And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed." The Hebrew construction of the last English phrase may be more accurately translated "they were not ashamed before one another."\footnote{BDB. p. 102.} Viewed in contrast with the "utter [shameful] nakedness" mentioned in Gen 3, the intent here is clear: namely, that "shameless sexuality was divinely ordered; shameful sexuality is the result of sin."\footnote{This will be discussed in a subsequent article, "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 3." forthcoming in \textit{AUSS}.} According to God's original design, sexuality is wholesome, beautiful, and good. It is meant to be experienced between spouses without fear, without inhibitions, without shame and embarrassment.

Just as the "one-flesh" experience applied to more than the physical union, so the concept of nakedness probably connotes more than physical nudity.\footnote{See Kidner, p. 66: Vs. 25 indicates "the perfect ease between them." The theory that Adam's and Eve's nakedness without shame refers to their lack of consciousness of their Sexuality Will be elaborated in my forthcoming article (See n. 80, above).} As Walter Trobisch states it, there is implied the ability "to stand in front of each other, stripped and undisguised, without pretensions, without hiding, seeing the partner as he or she really is, and showing myself to him or her as I really am--and still not be ashamed."\footnote{Trobisch, p. 82.}

\footnote{78 See Brueggemann, pp. 538-542, for evidence for linguistic and contextual indications of a covenant-making ceremony.} \footnote{79 BDB. p. 102.} \footnote{80 This will be discussed in a subsequent article, "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 3." forthcoming in \textit{AUSS}.} \footnote{81 Collins, p. 154.} \footnote{82 See Kidner, p. 66: Vs. 25 indicates "the perfect ease between them." The theory that Adam's and Eve's nakedness without shame refers to their lack of consciousness of their Sexuality Will be elaborated in my forthcoming article (See n. 80, above).} \footnote{83 Trobisch, p. 82.}
As we complete our discussion of the theology of sexuality in Gen 2, we must reject the claim that this chapter displays a "melancholy attitude toward sex."84 Instead, we must affirm with von Rad that Gen 2 "gives the relationship between man and woman the dignity of being the greatest miracle and mystery of creation."85

85 Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, 1:150.

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THE THEOLOGY OF SEXUALITY IN THE BEGINNING: GENESIS 3

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The creation accounts (Gen 1-2) coupled with the portrayal of disruption and divine judgment presented in Gen 3 have been described as of seminal character and determinative for a biblical theology of human sexuality. In a previous article we focused upon the theology of sexuality in the creation accounts.¹ Now we will explore the theological insights on sexuality emerging from Gen 3. Two basic issues related to sexuality call for our attention in Gen 3. The first concerns the contention by some scholars that Adam and Eve's "knowledge of good and evil" and their knowledge "that they were naked" (3:5, 7) both refer to the awakening of their sexual consciousness. The second issue involves the debate over the correct interpretation of the divine judgment on Eve (3:16).

1. Sexuality in Genesis 3:5

We cannot be long detained by those who contend that the knowledge of good and evil gained by Adam and Eve as a result of eating the forbidden fruit was actually a consciousness of sex.² Stephen Sapp rightly points out that "such a position assumes that sexuality itself occasions shame by its very nature (once one is aware of it)" and thus "suggests that sexuality was not part of God's intention for humans in creation," whereas both Gen 1 and 2, to the contrary, "consider sexuality to be a purposeful part of God's good creation, with no indication whatsoever that sexual experience was jealously withheld from Adam and Eve."³

The idea that a consciousness of sex came only after the Fall seems to be largely based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of Gen 3:7 and its relationship to Gen 2:25. It has been argued that since, according to Gen 3:7, Adam and Eve knew that they were naked only after the Fall, then Gen 2:25 must mean that they were not aware of their nakedness (or sexuality) in the beginning. But this line of argument fails to recognize that Gen 2 and 3 utilize two different Hebrew words for "naked."

In Gen 2:25 the word for "naked" is ‘arum, which elsewhere in Scripture frequently refers to someone not fully clothed or not clothed in the normal manner. Gen 2:25 does not explicitly indicate in what way Adam and Eve were without clothes in the normal sense ("normal" from the post-Fall perspective), but the semantic range of ‘arum is consonant with the conclusion toward which parallel creation/Paradise passages point, namely, that Adam and Eve were originally "clothed" with "garments" of light and glory. If such is the case in Gen 2:25, then the contrast with Gen 3 becomes clear. In Gen 3:7, 10, 11, the Hebrew word for "naked" is ‘erom, which elsewhere in Scripture always appears in a context of total (and usually shameful) exposure, describing someone "utterly

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4 In 1 Sam 19:24, for instance, the term is "used of one who, having taken off his mantle, goes only clad in his tunic" (William Gesenius, *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* [Grand Rapids, MI, 1949], p. 653). Again, in Isa 20:2 the reference is to one "dressed with saq only" (Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamentos Libros*, 2d ed. [Leiden, 1958], p. 735); cf. Jn 21:7. Other passages employ the term in the sense of "ragged, badly clad" (Job 22:6; 24:7, 10; Isa 58:7; Gesenius, p. 653).

5 We note in particular the parallel creation account in Ps 104. Jacques Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, Vol. 5 (Berrien Springs, MI, 1978), pp. 81-88. has analyzed the point-by-point parallels between Ps 104 and the Genesis creation story. What is significant for our discussion at this point is that in Ps 104, along with the poetic description of God's creative work, there appears to be at least one indication of his appearance, or rather, his "clothing" (vss. 1-2): "Thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment." If God is portrayed as clothed with "garments" of light and majesty, it is not unreasonable to deduce that man, created in the image and likeness of God, is similarly clothed. Ps 8:5 (6 Heb) may also point in this direction. According to this verse describing man in Paradise, God "crows" or "surrounds" (the latter if ‘atar is taken as Qal) him with glory and honor.
naked" or "bare." As a result of sin, the human pair find themselves "utterly naked," bereft of the garments of light and glory, and they seek to clothe themselves with fig leaves.

Even this post-Fall "nakedness" should not, however, be interpreted as causing Adam and Eve to be ashamed of their own bodies before each other. There is no mention of mutual embarrassment or shame before each other. The context is rather one of fear and dread before God. Adam says to God (3:10), "I heard the sound of thee in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

Adam's nakedness described here is also obviously more than physical nudity, for Adam depicts himself as still naked even though already covered with fig leaves. The nakedness of Gen 3 seems also to include a sense of "being unmasked," a consciousness of guilt, a nakedness of soul. Likewise, God's clothing of Adam and Eve with skins appears to represent more than a concern for physical covering, more than a demonstration of the modesty appropriate in a sinful world, though these are no doubt included. The skins from slain animals seem to intimate the beginning of the sacrificial system and the awareness of a substitutionary atonement, because of which "man need no longer feel unmasked or ashamed."

2. The Divine Judgment on Eve

When God comes to the Garden after Adam and Eve sinned, he initiates an encounter that constitutes nothing less than "a legal process," a "trial and punishment by God." God begins the legal proceedings with an interrogation of the "defendants," and the defensive and accusatory responses by Adam and Eve (vss. 9-14) indicate the rupture in interhuman (husband-wife) and divine-human relationships that has occurred as a result of sin. Following the legal interrogation and establishment of guilt, God pronounces

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8 Ibid., p. 104.

9 Ibid., p. 96.
the sentence in the form of curses (over the serpent and the ground, vss. 14, 17) and judgments (for the man and the woman, vss. 16-19). What is of particular concern to us is the judgment pronounced upon the woman (vs. 16):

(a) I will greatly multiply your pain [labor] in childbearing;
(b) in pain [labor] you shall bring forth children,
(c) yet your desire shall be for your husband,
(d) and he shall rule over you.

The first two lines of poetic parallelism in this verse (a and b) indicate that as a result of sin, childbearing will involve much ‘issabon (RSV, "pain") for the woman. The word ‘issabon occurs only three times in Scripture: here, vs. 17, and 5:29. The context of vs. 17 demands that ‘issabon in that verse be translated as "toil" or "labor" (as in RSV) and not "pain": "Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil/labor ['issabon] you shall eat of it all the days of your life." The same translation of ‘issabon is required by the context in Gen 5:29, and seems to be also more appropriate in Gen 3:16, with an emphasis upon the hard work and not the pain.10 Such an emphasis is accurately captured by the English term "labor" used to describe the birthing experience of woman.

But what is the meaning of the last two enigmatic lines (vs. 16 c and d) of the divine sentence upon the woman? The answer to this question is crucial for a proper understanding of the nature of God's design for sexual relationships after the Fall.

Interpretations of the Divine judgment on Eve

Five major views have been advanced in the history of biblical interpretation. A first, and perhaps the most common, position maintains that the subordination of woman is a creation ordinance, God's ideal from the beginning, but as a result of sin this original form of hierarchy between the sexes is distorted and corrupted and must be restored by the Gospel.11

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10 See BDB, pp. 780-781.
11 John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI, n.d.), 1:172, for instance, sees woman's position before the Fall as "liberal and gentle subjection," but after the Fall she is "cast into servitude." C. F. Keil, *The First Book of Moses* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1949), p. 103, similarly understands the original position of
A second major interpretation also views subordination as a creation ordinance but sees in Gen 3:16 not a distortion but a reaffirmation of subordination as a blessing and a comfort to the woman in her difficulties as a mother. The meaning of vs. 16c-d may be paraphrased: "You will have labor and difficulty in your motherhood, yet you will be eager for your husband and he will rule over you (in the sense of care for and help you, not in the sense of dominate and oppress you)."\textsuperscript{12}

A third major view contends that the subordination of woman to man did not exist before the Fall, and the mention of such a subordination in Gen 3:16 is only a description of the evil consequences of sin (the usurpation of authority by the husband), to be removed by the Gospel, and not a permanent prescription of God's will for husband-wife relationships after sin.\textsuperscript{13} Proponents of this position underscore the culturally conditioned nature of this passage and vigorously deny that it represents a divinely ordained normative position for sexual relationships after the Fall.

A fourth major position concurs with the third view that the submission of wife to husband is part of the evil consequences of man-woman as rule/subordination rooted in mutual esteem and love, but he argues that after sin the woman has a "desire bordering on disease" and the husband exercises "despotic rule" over his wife. James B. Hurley, \textit{Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective} (Grand Rapids, MI, 1981), pp. 218-219, concurs with a pre-Fall hierarchy of the sexes and a post-Fall distortion, but argues that Gen 3:16 should be interpreted along the lines of the similarly worded statement of God to Cain in Gen 4:7. Just as God warned Cain that sin's desire would be to control him, but he must master it, so woman's desire would be to control/manipulate man and the husband must master her desire. Cf. a similar position in Samuele Bacchiocchi, \textit{Women in the Church: A Biblical Study on the Role of Women in the Church} (Berrien Springs, MI, 1987), pp. 79-84.

\textsuperscript{12} Stephen B. Clark, \textit{Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in the Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences} (Ann Arbor, MI, 1980), p. 35. Clark does not rule out view 2 as a possibility, but he more strongly favors view 1. See also Ambrose, De Paradiso, p. 350 (quoted in Clark, p. 677): "Servitude, therefore, of this sort is a gift of God. Therefore, compliance with this servitude is to be reckoned among blessings."

the Fall and did not exist as a creation ordinance. But in the fourth view Gen 3:16 is to be understood as prescriptive and not just descriptive--i.e., it presents God's normative pattern for the relationship of husband and wife after the Fall.¹⁴

A final view agrees with the second that vs. 16c-d is a blessing and not a curse, but differs in denying that subordination of woman to man is a creation ordinance. This position also argues, in effect, that even in Gen 3 no hierarchy or headship in the sexes is either prescribed or described.¹⁵ According to this view, the word for "rule" (vs. 16d) is translated "to be like," emphasizing the equality of husband and wife.

**Assessment of the Divine judgment on Eve**

In our attempt to assess the true intent of this passage, we must immediately call into question those interpretations which proceed from the assumption that a hierarchy of the sexes existed before the Fall--i.e., views 1 and 2. The analysis of Gen 1-2 in my previous article has led to the conclusion that no such subordination or subjection of woman to man was present in the beginning.¹⁶


¹⁶ See Davidson, pp. 5-24. The views favoring a hierarchy of the sexes already in creation seem to be largely based on the Pauline passages that, at first sight, appear to ground the subordination of woman in creation. Two passages are especially in view: I Tim 2:13 and 1 Cor 11:8-9. This is not the place for an exposition of these Pauline statements. But it seems that most studies of these passages have made Paul say what in fact he does not say. Paul does indeed refer to creation in discussing the submission of wife to husband. But he does not say that the submissive role was in effect from creation. Rather, it seems more likely that Paul is arguing that after the Fall, when a subjection of one spouse to another was necessary in order to preserve union and harmony (see discussion below, pp. 127-130), God chose the man to "rule," because, among other reasons, he was created first and Eve was made from and for Adam. It should be noted that in 1 Tim 2:14, Paul specifically places the submission within the context of the Fall. Krister Stendahl seems to be correct when he points out that Gen 3:16 constitutes "the decisive Scriptural passage for the whole New Testament's instruction concerning the submission of women." (Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics* [Philadelphia, 19661, p. 29.) In another Pauline passage describing subordination of women, 1 Cor 14:34-35, support for Paul's position is given as "the words of the
Furthermore, it appears that view 3 is unsatisfactory, for it fails to take seriously the judgment/punishment context of the passage. As we have already noted, Gen 3:16 comes in a legal "trial" setting. God's pronouncement is therefore not merely a culturally conditioned description. It is a divine sentence! It must be concluded that "the judgments of God, who is Lord of time and culture, are universally applicable to the fallen (sinful) world." Just as God destines the snake to crawl on its belly; just as God ordains that woman's childbirth is to involve her "going into labor"; just as God curses the ground so that it will not produce crops spontaneously but require man's cultivation and labor--so God pronounces the irrevocable sentence upon Eve with regard to her future relationship with Adam outside the Garden.

It seems clear that according to Gen 3:16c-d a change is instituted in the relationship between the sexes after the Fall, a change which involves the subjection/submission of the wife to the husband. The force of vs. 16d is difficult to avoid: "He [your husband] shall rule over you." The word masal in this form in vs. 16d definitely means "to rule" (and not "to be like") and definitely implies subjection. Theodorus Vriezen correctly concludes that woman's position after the Fall is one of subjection to her husband: "This is considered as a just and permanent punishment in Gen iii." Umberto Cassuto aptly paraphrases and amplifies the divine law." In this phrase, according to Stendahl, "it is still Gen 3:16 which is alluded to." Statements regarding creation are made only with reference to their applicability after the Fall. And significantly, only after the Fall is Adam representative (Gen 3:9; cf. Hurley, p. 216).


18 Recent attempts by some feminists to translate masal as "to be like" instead of "to rule" face insurmountable lexical/grammatical/contextual obstacles. It is true that (following BDB nomenclature) the root mull in the Niph'al does signify "to be like, similar," but in Gen 3:16 the root msl is in the Qal. Both msl\textsuperscript{II} "to use a proverb" and msl\textsuperscript{III} "to rule" occur in the Qal, but the context of Gen 3:16 seems to clearly preclude the idea of "use a proverb" (msl\textsuperscript{I}). That msl\textsuperscript{III} "to rule" is intended in this passage is confirmed by the use of the accompanying preposition be, the normal preposition following msl\textsuperscript{III} (cf. BDB, p. 605), and other Hebrew words of ruling, governing, restraining (mlk, rdh, slt, 'sr, etc.), and never used with mull or msl\textsuperscript{II}. Arguments based largely on the meaning of ancient Near Eastern cognates should not be allowed to override the biblical context, grammar, and usage.

19 Vriezen, p. 399.
sentence: "Measure for measure; you influenced your husband and caused him to do what you wished; henceforth, you and your female descendants will be subservient to your husbands."\textsuperscript{20}

But we should immediately note that the word \textit{masal}, "rule," employed in vs. 16 is not the same word used to describe human-kind's rulership over the animals in Gen 1:26, 28. In the latter passages the verb is \textit{radah}, "to tread down, have dominion over,"\textsuperscript{21} not \textit{masal}. A careful distinction is maintained between human-kind's dominion over the animals and the husband's "rule" over his wife. Furthermore, although the verb \textit{masal} does consistently indicate submission, subjection, or dominion in Scripture, "the idea of tyrannous exercise of power does not lie in the verb."\textsuperscript{22} In fact, there are many passages where \textit{masal} is used with the connotation of "rule" in the sense of "comfort, protect, care for, love."\textsuperscript{23}

The semantic range of the verb \textit{masal} thus makes it possible to understand the divine sentence in vs. 16 as involving not only punishment but blessing, just as the judgments pronounced upon the serpent and man included an implied blessing in the curse/judgment.\textsuperscript{24} That the element of blessing is especially emphasized in this verse appears to be confirmed by recognizing the probable,

\textsuperscript{20} Umberto Cassuto, \textit{A Commentary on the Book of Genesis} (Jerusalem, 1961), 1:165.
\textsuperscript{21} BDB, pp. 921-922.
\textsuperscript{23} See e.g., 2 Sam 23:3; Prov 17:2; Isa 40:10; 63:19; Zech 6:13. Cf. Robert D. Culver, "מַשָּׁל (mashal) III," \textit{TWOT}, 1:534: "mashal usually receives the translation 'to rule,' but the precise nature of the rule is as various as the real situations in which the action or state so designated occur." Specific examples follow to support this statement. Note, e.g., that the first usage of \textit{masal} in Scripture is in reference to the two great lights created by God (Gen 1:16)-they were to "dominate" (NJV) the day and night.
\textsuperscript{24} Hurley, pp. 216-219, has rightly pointed out how in each of the divine judgments in this chapter there is a blessing as well as a curse. In the curse upon the serpent appears a veiled blessing in the \textit{Protoevangelion} (3:15): "The warfare between Satan and the woman's seed comes to its climax in the death of Christ." (Hurley, p. 217; cf. Walter Kaiser, \textit{Toward an Old Testament Theology} [Grand Rapids, MI, 1978], pp. 35-37, for persuasive evidence in favor of this traditional interpretation in contrast to the modern critical tendency to see here only an aetiological reference.) Likewise, in the curse of the ground and the "toil" that is the punishment of Adam, there is at the same time a blessing in that God promises the ground will continue to yield its fruit and man will still be able to eat of it. Furthermore, the term \textit{ba'abur} employed in vs. 17 probably means "for the sake of"
synonymous parallelism between vs. 16c and vs. 16d. God pronounces that even though the woman would have difficult "labor" in childbirth--an ordeal that would seem naturally to discourage her from continuing to have relations with her husband--"yet," God assures her, "your desire shall be for your husband." The meaning of the Hebrew word ְֹסֹעָה, "strong desire, yearning," which appears only three times in Scripture, is illuminated by its only other occurrence in a context of man-woman relationship, i.e., Cant 7:10 (11 Heb). In this verse the Shulamite bride joyfully exclaims, "I am my beloved's, and his desire [ְֹסֹעָה] is for me."

Along the lines of this usage of ְֹסֹעָה in the Song of Songs indicating a wholesome sexual desire, the term appears to be employed in Gen 3:16c to denote a positive blessing accompanying the divine judgment. A divinely ordained sexual yearning of wife for husband will serve to sustain the union that has been threatened in the ruptured relations resulting from sin.

If Gen 3:16d is seen to be in close parallelism with vs. 16c, then the emphasis upon blessing as well as judgment seems to accrue also to man's relationship with his wife. The husband's "rule"

(KJV) and not "because of " (RSV) inasmuch as the meaning of "because" is already expressed by ki earlier in the verse. The ground is cursed "for his [Adam's] sake": that is, the curse is for Adam's benefit. Though it did result from Adam's sin, it also is to be regarded as a needful discipline, part of the divine plan for man's recovery from the results of sin.

Otwell, p. 18, cogently argues that the normal structure of Hebrew parallelism is followed here in that Gen 3:16a and b are in parallel and 3:16c and d are likewise in parallel. As the first two parallel members of this verse duplicate content with regard to childbearing, so "we may expect .. that 'he shall rule over you' parallels 'your desire shall be for your husband.'" Otwell's argument is strengthened by the use of the conjunctive translated by "yet."

See BDB, p. 1003.

The only other occurrence of this word in the Hebrew Bible is in Gen 4:7, which has no reference to a man-woman relationship. Despite the similarity of grammar and vocabulary, the latter verse must not be held up as a standard of interpretation for Gen 3:16, which involves a completely different context. Those who interpret Gen 3:16 by means of 4:7 generally hold to the hierarchy of the sexes as a creation ordinance, and therefore must find something more than subordination in 3:16. But it hardly seems justified to compare the experience of Eve with the picture of sin as a wild animal crouching in wait for his prey (Derek Kidner, Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary [Downer's Grove, IL, 1967], p. 75). For a discussion of the possible reasons for similar wording between the widely different contexts of Gen 3:16 and 4:7, see Cassuto, 1:212-213.
over his wife, even though it grows out of the results of sin, may be regarded as a blessing in preserving the harmony and union of the relationship. As is implied in the semantic range of masal, and as becomes explicit in the Song of Songs, this is to be a "rule," not of tyrannical power, but of protection, care, and love.

3. Conclusion

We thus conclude that of the suggested interpretations for Gen 3:16 described above, view 4 is to be preferred, in that there is a normative divine sentence announcing a subjection/submission of wife to husband as a result of sin. This involves, however, not only a negative judgment but also (and especially) a positive blessing (as suggested in views 2 & 5).

Two final points must be underscored with regard to a theology of sexuality in Gen 3. First, it must be noted that the relationship of subjection/submission prescribed in vs. 16 is not presented as applicable to man-woman relationships in general. Gen 3 provides no basis for suggesting that the basic equality between male and female established in creation was altered as a result of the Fall. The context of Gen 3:16 is specifically that of marriage: a wife's desire for her husband and the husband's "rule" over his wife. The text indicates a submission of wife to husband, not a general subordination of woman to man. Any attempt to extend this prescription beyond the husband-wife relationship is not warranted by the text.28

28 Some commentators argue that in such passages as 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:13-14, Paul has widened the original submission of wife to husband in Gen 3:16 to include the submission of all women to men in general, and based on this, he is thought to have excluded woman from teaching authority in the church, etc. But may I suggest this widening may be in the minds of the commentators and not, in the mind of Paul! The possible ambiguity comes because in the original text the same Greek word (gyne) means both wife and woman, and another single Greek word (aner) means both husband and man. In these crucial Pauline passages on the role of woman which allude to Gen 3:16, the translation can be either "woman-man" or "wife-husband." These passages that have usually been taken to refer to the role of woman in relation to man in general, may instead be referring to the relationship of wives to their husbands and may have nothing whatever to do with limiting woman's sphere of service and leadership in the church. As a case in point, 1 Tim 2:11-12 is translated in the RSV: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over man; she is to keep silent." But the Williams translation puts it this way: "A married woman must
Second, we must emphasize that although in Gen 3 the husband is assigned the role of "first among equals" so as to preserve harmony and union in the marriage partnership, yet this does not contradict or nullify the summary statement of Gen 2:24 regarding the nature of the relationship between husband and wife. As we have already observed, Gen 2:24 is written in such a way as to indicate its applicability to the post-Fall conditions. God's ideal for the nature of sexual relationship after the Fall is still the same as it was for Adam and Eve in the beginning—to "become one flesh." The divine judgment/blessing in Gen 3:16 was given, we may conclude, in order to facilitate the achievement of the original divine design within the context of a sinful world.

learn in quiet and perfect submission. I do not permit a married woman to practice teaching or domineering over a husband; she must keep quiet." A world of difference in meaning! For evidence supporting this latter translation, see N. J. Hommes, "Let Women Be Silent in Church," Calvin Theological Journal 4(1969):5-22. Note in particular how an almost exactly parallel passage in 1 Peter 3:5, 6 clearly demands the translation "wife/husband" and not "woman/man." Likewise the passage in 1 Cor 14:34-35 is in close parallel with Eph 5:22-24, and in the latter the translation must be "wives and husbands" and not "women and men" in general.


30 See Davidson, pp. 12-24.

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THE ATONEMENT AND HUMAN SACRIFICE
DAVID R. DILLING

Many trusting hearts have paused to ponder the weighty words of Genesis 22:2, "Take now thy son . . . and offer him for a burnt-offering." This text prompted Soren Kierkegaard to ask, "Is there such a thing as a teleological suspension of the ethical?" Most serious readers of Genesis 22 have doubtless shared the concern which promoted Kierkegaard's enquiry.

The problem with which we are here concerned regards the interpretation of the phrase, "And offer him there for a burnt-offering." Did this mean that Abraham was actually to kill and cremate his own son? If so, how can Yahweh (Jehovah) be justified for making such a command? Are not such sacrifices prohibited? Is not the very idea abhorrent, and does not the very suggestion offend our moral sensitivity? Or was Abraham merely commanded to wholly dedicate his son to Yahweh? In this case, why is the expression 'olah used, and how can God be vindicated for allowing Abraham so grossly to misinterpret His will? In either case there is a theodicy--the problem of reconciling the divine command with the otherwise known divine nature and purpose.

There is, to be sure, an awesome aspect to the stern, succinct narrative regarding the sacrifice of Isaac. Unfortunately, many readers have been overawed. The present study is not slanted to the liberal theologian, but to the otherwise conservative interpreter who through his awe at the sacrifice of Isaac has prepared himself for major hermeneutical and Christological concessions.

The severity of Abraham's test and hence the significance of the problem of this study was greatly multiplied by the soteriological implications of his action. The promise of salvation and blessing was to come through Isaac. This was clear enough to Abraham. But if to him, how much more is that clear to us who have the full revelation concerning that seed through whom all nations will be blessed, even Jesus. The Divine Providence seems to delight in manifesting the glory and power of God in such incidents where the hope for the fulfillment of the Messianic promise hangs by the finest thread--and that about to be cut off. As in the day that Cain killed Abel; as in the day that Athaliah destroyed all the seed royal save Joash; as in the day that Haman devised his wicked plot against the kin of Mordecai; and as in the day that Herod sought the life of Messiah Himself; so it seemed on this occasion, Abraham was commanded not only to sacrifice his beloved son, "but to cut in pieces, or cast into the fire, the charter of his salvation, and to have nothing left for himself, but death and hell."1

Two problems bearing on the sacrifice of Isaac demand attention before the nature of that sacrifice can rightly be evaluated. These are the relation of Abraham to the rite of human sacrifice and the attitude of Yahweh toward the same.

THE PRACTICE OF HUMAN SACRIFICE

The sacrifice of Isaac has traditionally been related in one way or another to the practice of human sacrifice. It is supposed that such sacrifices were prevalent in Abraham's day. It
is urged on the one hand that Abraham's offering was qualitatively identical to that of his pagan ancestors and neighbors. Others maintain that the experience of Abraham is unique, and should be compared only with the sacrificial death of Christ, to which it bears a typical relationship.

In the early stages of modern archaeological discovery, generalizations regarding practices such as human sacrifice were sometimes made with too great haste. Time has tempered the judgment of authorities, but the evidence that such sacrifices were actually carried out remains intact. In Mesopotamia, for example, we have the positive evidence of a published Babylonian cylinder seal which unmistakably portrays the actual execution of a human sacrifice. A.H. Sayce, British Assyriologist of a generation ago, has called attention to an Akkadian poem of pre-Semitic times with its later Assyrian translation concerning the sacrifice of a firstborn son. It says distinctly, "His offspring for his life he gave."

Biblical evidence that human sacrifice was known in Mesopotamia in later times is found in II Ki. 17:31, "...And the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim." Among the Canaanites, the silence of the Ugaritic texts with respect to human sacrifice has confirmed the opinion of Prof. Albright that human sacrifice, though well known, "does not seem to have been practiced quite so frequently as used to be thought." Among the Hebrews, it must be conceded that human sacrifice was never an established or recognized part of the Jewish religion. The sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, for example, will admit of interpretation other than that of a true human sacrifice.

Although rejecting the idea that human sacrifice was ever a legitimate or recognized element of the religion of Israel, it cannot be denied that the cult did exist as an idolatrous abomination in times of religious declension and national apostasy. Biblical references to such sacrifices uniformly relate them to the worship of the deity Molech.

We conclude therefore that Abraham probably had some knowledge and experience with human sacrifice. It appears, though, that such knowledge was more limited than was supposed in previous generations. On the other hand, we deny on the basis of Levitical legislation that Yahweh ever demanded human sacrifice as a general practice for the nation of Israel. Therefore, whatever else is said of God's demand upon Abraham, it must be acknowledged that his experience is unique in Old Testament history.

YAHWEH AND HUMAN SACRIFICE

It is generally assumed that the Old Testament categorically prohibits the rite of human sacrifice. To be sure, the Mosaic Law contains certain prohibitions in this regard. However, a thorough examination of these prohibitions sheds significant light on the problem of the sacrifice of Isaac. For example, (1) The legal prohibitions, as well as the prophetic polemics, are uniformly related to heathen deities. In the passages cited, human sacrifice occurs almost incidentally amid lists of abominations rendered in connection with idolatrous worship. (2) The greater offense is not the sacrifice, but the idolatry involved in offering such a sacrifice to a god other than Yahweh. The first commandment is not, "Thou shalt not offer human sacrifices," but, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (3) The Bible contains no prohibitions of human sacrifice to Yahweh. The only possible exception to this principle is the legislation regarding the redemption of the first-born sons in Ex. 13:1-16.

This passage, however, does not condemn human sacrifice. On the contrary, it proves that Yahweh had a very definite claim on all the first-born of Israel, whether man or beast.
The Grace of God in the Redemption of First-Born Sons

Following the judgment on the first-born in Egypt and in connection with the institution of the passover, Yahweh demanded that all the first-born in Israel be sanctified to Him (Ex. 13:1). The clean beasts were to be sacrificed, the unclean were to be redeemed with a lamb or killed, and the first-born of men were to be redeemed. This passage, taken at face value, must mean that Yahweh had a claim on the first-born which would have involved their death, save for His gracious provision for their redemption. Theories of interpretation which refuse to admit this minimize the sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of man. When one rightly appreciates that his very existence and his continuation in existence are dependent upon the grace of God ("It is of Jehovah's loving kindness that we are not consumed," Lam. 3:22), then the demand of God upon the life of any particular individual will pose no problem.

Prof. Sayce, although he insists that, "Abraham, in accordance with the fierce ritual of Syria, believed himself called upon to offer up in sacrifice his only son," nevertheless, admits that Yahweh had a claim on the first-born sons of Israel. "He could claim them, and it was of His own free-will that he waived the claim." It is not surprising that expositors generally have failed to see this point since they have rejected the more ultimate thesis that human sacrifice per se is an amoral act. We contend, on the other hand, that no act is inherently moral or immoral except as it impinges on the revealed will of God. Therefore, any argument against human sacrifice which begins with the premise that God could not require such a sacrifice errs in beginning from a false premise. Since the sin of Adam, it is only by the grace of God that any man has been permitted to live. Therefore, *a fortiori*, it is only by the grace of God that any particular individual or group is spared.

Sacrifice or Obedience

The most frequent objection raised against the Biblical presentation of Yahweh and His relationship to sacrifice is that sacrifice, whether of human beings or of beasts, is an element of primitive religion, and that Yahweh really desires not sacrifice at all but obedience.

Those who argue this way support their claims with such texts as Genesis 22, urging that the outcome of the Abraham/Isaac incident proves that Yahweh was really interested in the obedience of Abraham and not the sacrifice of Isaac. Another text, frequently used is I Sam. 15:22:

> And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

The spirit of the objection is evident in the opinion of Marcus Dods with respect to the sacrifice of Isaac:

> God meant Abraham to make the sacrifice in spirit, not in the outward act; he meant to write deeply on the Jewish mind the fundamental lesson regarding sacrifice, that it is in the spirit and will that all true sacrifice is made...The sacrifice God seeks is the devotion of the living soul, not the consumption of a dead body.
This view, carried to its logical conclusion, would eliminate the necessity of the sacrificial death of Christ. This in turn eliminates the atonement and thereby abnegates the whole Christian gospel. A few commentators have seen this and candidly admitted to the consequence. Lange, for example, after drawing the distinction of two kinds of sacrifice, namely, the spiritual consecration of a man as a sacrifice, and the visible slaughter of an animal, argues that the latter is only symbolical and typical of the former. He concludes:

In the crucifixion, these two sacrifices outwardly come together, while really and spiritually they are separated as widely as heaven and hell. Christ yields himself in perfect obedience to the will of the Father, in the judgment of the world. That is the fulfilling of the Israelitish sacrifice. Caiaphas will suffer the innocent to die for the good of the people John xi. 50), and even Pilate yields him to the will of men (Luke xxiii. 25); this is the completion of Moloch-sacrifice.16

To assert that the death of Christ was only Pilate's idea is certainly far afield from Pauline theology which says:

. . .While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son. . . (Rom. 5: 10).
. . .in whom we have redemption through his blood (Eph. 1:7).
. . .Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweet smell (Eph. 5:2).

The view that sacrifice is subordinate to obedience stems from two diametrically opposed points of view. Those who take the Bible seriously and regard it as indeed the written revelation of God tend to minimize the importance of Old Testament sacrifices on the basis of New Testament theology. The New Testament regards those sacrifices made under the old dispensation as subordinate and inferior to the sacrifice of Christ--"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second" (Heb. 8:7). They are regarded as typical or symbolic--"For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh" (Heb. 10:4). On the other hand, those who do not treat the Bible with such "wooden-headed literalism" deny that God ever wanted or demanded sacrifices at all. The institution of sacrifice is a primitive, savage rite that was merely tolerated for a season until more advanced revelation could be received.

The latter position we reject on the grounds of our presupposition that the Holy Scriptures are an inspired and inerrant revelation, and the corollary that the religion of Israel is therefore essentially revealed rather than evolved. However, even apart from this premise, it is quite possible to establish with a relatively high degree of certitude that the origin of sacrifice must be accounted for on the basis of divine revelation. Hobart Freeman has pointed out that:
The universal prevalence of the practice of vicarious and piacular sacrifice. . .cannot be reasonably explained apart from the idea that it was derived from a common and authoritative source.17

He has also examined the only alternative explanations, namely, that the practice of sacrifice arose from (1) some dictate of reason; (2) some demand of nature; or (3) some principle of interest, and found them wholly inadequate.18

The other position, that the Old Testament sacrifices were not so important after all, is quite as serious as the liberal view, for in attempting to exalt the significance of the death of Christ, it actually has the opposite effect of undermining the basis thereof. This view also minimizes the Old Testament teaching that for the individual under the old covenant the Levitical sacrifices were the only possible means of atonement for sin and the only means through which Yahweh chose to be propitiated. Although He expected that the offerer would bring the appointed sacrifice in an attitude of repentance and faith, it by no means follows that a proper "heart-attitude" without the appropriate form would be acceptable to Yahweh.19

The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Having cleared away certain relatively superficial matters we come now to the crux of the whole issue. The crucial question related to the proposed sacrifice of Isaac is this: In the death of Christ, did God actually demand the sacrifice of an innocent human being as a substitutionary sacrifice for others, thereby atoning for their sins and propitiating the wrath of a holy God against them? The dilemma which this question poses for the interpreter is: If answered affirmatively, then there is no a priori ground for denying that God could have demanded the actual slaying of Isaac as a sacrifice. Indeed, if God could demand the death of his own Son as a substitutionary sacrifice, then there is more ground for expecting Him to demand the sacrifice of other human beings than for denying the same. On the other hand, if one answers negatively, then the whole basis for Christian salvation is destroyed.

Biblical Representation of the Atonement

Scholastic theologians established the proposition that our knowledge of God and spiritual realities is neither univocal nor equivocal but analogical. As such our understanding of great spiritual truths is related to a variety of figures. This is especially true of the death of Christ. Historically, theologians have erred through an unbalanced emphasis of one of the figures, excluding or minimizing the others. It is therefore important to know just what the Bible does teach, and to have a balanced picture of that teaching.

The death of Christ and its significance is the very center of the Biblical message. Texts cited here are only a representative sample of the Biblical teaching. The death of Christ is represented as:

(1) Sacrificial.

For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ (I Cor. 5:7).
(2) Expiatory.
For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:13-14).

(3) Propitiatory.
Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (I Jn. 4: 10).

(4) Redemptive.
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree (Gal. 3:13).

(5) Representative.
For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and he died for all, that they that live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again (II Cor. 5: 14-15).

(6) Exemplary.
For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps (I Pet. 2:21).

(7) Triumphantorial.
You, I say, did he make alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having despoiled the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Co. 2:15).

(8) Substitutionary.
But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:5-6).

Historical Interpretations

In the process of analysis and systematization the Church has in various periods emphasized the above aspects of Christ's death in different ways. Apart from an outright denial
of the efficacy of Christ's work none of the historical interpretations are wholly in error. They are deficient from the standpoint of what they omit rather than defective from the standpoint of what they include.

The so-called "theories of the atonement" have been enumerated and discussed voluminously. Theories have been variously grouped and separated, contrasted and compared.

The most frequent division is that of (1) subjective theories, (2) objective theories, and (3) all shades of opinion on the "misty flats in between." In our discussion here we have chosen an outstanding representative from each of five distinct positions. It is our intention to show by this study that Christian orthodoxy has developed a doctrine of the atonement which harmonizes with the Biblical picture of Christ's death as a sacrifice, that this sacrifice was in accord with the eternal counsels of God, and that the sacrifice of a theanthropic person was the only possible means of securing a reconciliation between a holy God and sinful men.

Irenaeus (second century, A.D.)--We begin with the Patristic church taking as a representative Irenaeus. The early Fathers obviously believed in salvation through the work of Christ. They adhered closely to the Biblical figures in speaking of Christ's death. However, the early church had no theological formulation on the atonement--as it did, for example, on the trinity or the nature of Christ's person. For this reason it is easy to misinterpret illustrations used by the Fathers as comprising their whole concept of the doctrine. The view of the early church with respect to Christ's death has frequently been designated the "Ransom theory," or the "Devil-ransom theory." This is due to the Patristic emphasis on the redemptive aspect of Christ's work which was crudely spoken of in those days as a ransom price paid by God to Satan. It was deemed necessary, in light of man's bondage to sin, death, and Satan, that the ransom for men's souls be paid to Satan, their captor. It is true that this concept formed a common motif in those early discussions.

And since the Apostasy [i.e. the rebellious spirit, Satan] unjustly held sway over us, and though we were by nature [the possession] of Almighty God, estranged us against nature, making us his own disciples; therefore the Word of God, mighty in all things and not lacking in his own justice, acted justly even in the encounter with the Apostasy itself, ransoming from it that which was his own, not by force, in the way in which it secured the sway over us in the beginning, snatching insatiably what was not its own; but by persuasion, as it became God to receive what he wished; by persuasion, not by use of force, that the principles of justice might not be infringed, and, at the same time, that God's original creation might not perish.20

Irenaeus further spoke of Christ's redeeming and sanctifying every stage of human life by his recapitulation of the same in his own life.

For we have shown that the Son of God did not then begin to exist since he existed with the Father always; but when he was incarnate and made man, he recapitulated [or summed up] in himself the long line of the human race, procuring for us salvation thus summarily, so that what we had lost in Adam, that is, the being in the image and likeness of God, that we should regain in Christ Jesus.21
Later writers, particularly Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, and Augustine, elaborated the theory of Irenaeus into a fantastic scheme whereby God deceived Satan, as with a fish-hook or mouse-trap, and thus gained the victory over Satan and his forces.

These views, though not a technical theological formulation, characterized the thought of the church for about a thousand years, until the writing of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*. Anselm (1033–1109).—Few writings in the history of Christianity have had an influence comparable to Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*. For all its brevity, it marks a turning point in Christological and soteriological thought. *Cur Deus Homo* is really the first serious attempt to define the nature of the atonement. As such it should be the terminus a quo of all subsequent discussions.

In contrast to Augustine's view that it was good or fitting that God forgive sinners on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, Anselm attempted to prove by logical argument that there was no other way. Only God himself could repay man's infinite debt and only a man could make that payment for men. He attacked the old ransom theory, particularly the idea that Satan had certain "rights" over men. Sin is a violation of God's law, an offense to His honor and majesty. It is therefore the honor of God that must be satisfied rather than the claims of Satan.

The theory of Anselm was largely cast in the terms of feudal society. It was addressed more to the honor or majesty of God than to His holiness. His view, however, was refined by the reformers, especially Calvin, later by John Owen and Jonathan Edwards, and is still held by consistent Calvinists. The view of Anselm, albeit with refinements and variation, is defended by James Denny, George Smeaton, T. J. Crawford, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd, A. H. Strong, L. S. Chafer, and others of our own era. It is variously referred to as the commercial view, the penal view, the satisfaction view or the substitutionary view.

Abelard (1079–1142).—The objective theories were based on the view of sin as a violation of God's law. Man stands separated from God by reason of his own personal sin as well as by reason of his inherited guilt from Adam's sin. He is helpless to change his status of condemnation apart from a sovereign intervention of grace. It is altogether reasonable that the Pelagian view of sin should generate a theory of the atonement that enables man to help himself. This type of theory, so-called the subjective or moral influence, was given classic expression by Peter Abelard. In his opinion the purpose of the death of Christ was to impress man with the love of God and thereby morally influence him to surrender his life to God.

Sin is forgiven gratis on the sole condition of repentance and a desire to do better. In his commentary on Romans, Abelard writes:

Now it seems to us that we have been justified by the blood of Christ and reconciled to God in this way: through this unique act of grace manifested to us--in that his Son has taken upon himself our nature and persevered therein in teaching us by word and example even unto death--he has more fully bound us to himself by love; with the result that our hearts should be enkindled by such a gift of divine grace, and true charity should not now shrink from enduring anything for him.
A generation ago this theory was defended with various modifications by Albrecht Ritschl and Fredrich Schliermacher of Germany (mystical theory); Edward Irving and McLeod Camprell of Britain (respectively, the theories of gradually extirpated depravity and vicarious repentance); and Horace Bushnell of America (theory of vicarious sacrifice).

This view of Christ's work was one of the outstanding features of modernistic theology and is by no means dead today. William Adams Brown, leading modernist theologian, taught that Christ's saving work consisted of the revelation of the loving character of God which calls forth an answering love in us. This revelation influences us morally by what it shows us to be true. Nels Ferre relieves that, "Forgiveness is free and direct to those who are willing henceforth to live responsibly on the Father's terms for the family." Unitarians subscribe to the example variation of Abelard's theory.

Grotius (1583-1645).--In the seventeenth century, Hugo Grotius of Leyden, Holland, propounded a theory which Warfield calls a half-way-house between the objective and subjective views. His view is called the governmental or rectoral theory and is expressed in legal terminology--Grotius himself being a brilliant lawyer. Sin is regarded as rebellion against the government of God. God in his love will forgive sin but he must demonstrate publicly that He will not condone sin and thus make forgiveness possible.

This theory has been adopted and defended by Arminian theologians from the reformation onward. It is really the highest form of atonement doctrine logically conformable to Arminian theology which rejects the doctrine of imputation, either of sin or of righteousness. Defenders of the governmental view include Charles Finney, F. Godet, R. W. Dale, Alfred Cave, John Miley, and Marcus Dods.

Aulen (Prof. of Systematic Theology, University of Lund).--The ransom theory of the early church, though it erred in the matter of God's deceiving and bribing Satan, had the value of emphasizing man's bondage to Satan and the necessity of his being freed from that bondage by the work of Christ. It supported the objectivity of Christ's work. Luther also emphasized Christ's death as a victory over Satan and man's deliverance from sin, death, and the law. The old view--which was not, as we have noted, a systematic formulation at all--has been revived in our day by a group of Swedish theologians, notably, Gustaf Aulen, and primarily in his book, Christus Victor. He refers to his view as the "Classic" or "Triumphantorial" view.

Describing his own view, Aulen writes:

"It was...my intention to emphasize that the outlook of the Atonement as a drama, where the love of God in Christ fights and conquers the hostile powers, is a central and decisive perspective which never can be omitted and which indeed must stamp every really Christian doctrine of the Atonement."

A recent neo-orthodox writer, William Hordern, praises Aulen for rescuing the true view from the unfortunate terminology in which it was expressed. He argues,
It would be strange indeed if the Bible taught the fundamentalist or Anselmic doctrine and if for the first thousand years of Christianity no one recognized it.\textsuperscript{34}

Hordern also notes that Aulen's view has found wide acceptance among neo-orthodox thinkers because it combines the incarnation and the atonement.\textsuperscript{35}

The Atonement in Modern Thought

A generation ago, B. B. Warfield said:

Voices are raised all about us proclaiming a "theory" of the atonement impossible, while many of those that essay a "theory" seem to be feeling their tortuous way very much in the dark. That, if I mistake not, is the real state of affairs in the modern church.\textsuperscript{36}

If that darkness shrouded the theological discussion in Warfield's day, and he was presumably a qualified judge, his characterization is certainly no less true of the situation today.

It is sufficient for our present purpose to note several outstanding characteristics of the contemporary (i.e., post-reformation) discussion of the atonement.

First, let it be noted that the noncommittal attitude to which Warfield made reference is still with us. William Hordern, in his popular handbook, \textit{A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology}, candidly admits this:

Whereas fundamentalism makes the Atonement central, modern orthodoxy\textsuperscript{37} tends to make the Incarnation central. Fundamentalism is committed to one view of atonement—the substitutionary death of Christ for the sins of man. Modern orthodoxy is, in line with historic Christianity, hesitant to make any doctrine of atonement final. The result is that the death of Jesus is of central importance for fundamentalism, while modern orthodoxy, like liberalism, looks to the whole life of Jesus. In particular, modern orthodoxy emphasizes that the Resurrection of Jesus cannot be separated from his atoning work.\textsuperscript{38}

An Objective theory: Sine Qua Non.--One of the striking characteristics of this area of thought in our own day is the quest for a satisfactory objective theory. Objective, that is, except for the "morally objectionable" penal and substitutionary elements of traditional orthodox theology.\textsuperscript{39} Leon Morris, of Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, has pointed out this characteristic in a splendid article in \textit{HIS} magazine. He writes:

Marked dissatisfaction with purely moral theories of the atonement has been evident in recent years, and very few (if any) front rank theologians put forth such views nowadays. This does not mean that any unanimity of opinion exists, but it does mean that men are feeling for some theory which will be objective, and yet will not outrage the ideas of our day.\textsuperscript{40}
Morris explains that the most popular view is one or another variation of the representative theory. That is, Christ was not our substitute nor was his death a sacrifice as such but he did do something that serves as a basis for reconciliation.

He was not separate from sinners in His suffering, but dying in their name, dying for their sake, dying in a way which avails for them.41

In his important work, God Was in Christ, C. M. Baillie struggles with the problem of defining a theory which is objective and yet avoids the notions of sacrifice, substitution, and propitiation. He denies that Christ's death was a true sacrifice at all—though Old Testament sacrificial terms are used to describe it.42 The New Testament expression hilasmos has nothing to do with appeasing an angry God, "For the love of God is the starting place."43

In fact, the Old Testament sacrificial terminology is completely transformed by the usage of the New Testament.44 Nevertheless, he insists that God did something objective and costly in Christ to make reconciliation possible. The objective element, that which is "Ordained" and accepted by God, in 'expiation' of human sin, quite apart from our knowledge of it, is the sacrifice which God is continually making of himself and to himself by suffering on account of sin.

. . .He is infinite Love confronted with human sin. And it is an expiatory sacrifice, because sin is a dreadfully real thing which love cannot tolerate or lightly pass over, and it is only out of the suffering of such inexorable love that true forgiveness, as distinct from an indulgent amnesty, could ever come.45

Aulen, too, as we have noted,46 although he denies the "commercial" view does set forth an objective theory.

Christ--Christus Victor--fights against and triumphs over the evil powers of the world, the 'tyrants'47 under which mankind is in bondage and suffering, and in Him God reconciles the world to himself.48

In short, modern theologians have come to recognize that an objective theory is the conditio sine qua non of any atonement theory that purports to be Biblical.

Christ's death as a sacrifice. --Another significant feature of recent Christological thought is the recognition of Christ's death as a sacrifice. Oliver Quick, C. H. Dodd, Vincent Taylor, and A. M. Hunter have given support to this view. The death of Christ is regarded as the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. Christ died vicariously in the interests of sinful men and forgiveness is mediated through his sacrifice.49

Wm. Hordem, in the work cited above, says in reply to Abelard: "Christ's death can only be a revelation of God's love for man if it was a necessary sacrifice. It is meaningless if man could be saved without it."50 His own view of Christianity is:

Whereas most religions believe that man has to do something to atone to God, Christianity teaches that God himself performed the atoning work. Other
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religions perform sacrifices in order that God might turn his angry face back toward man and forgive him. Christianity teaches that God has performed a sacrifice, in and through Jesus, which has brought God and man back into fellowship with each other.51

By and large, however, the theologians of our own day who use the terminology of Old Testament sacrifice in speaking of the death of Christ do not mean that Christ's death was a sacrifice in that sense. Rather, sacrifice is distinguished as to (1) Sacrifice as a sacrificial gift, a votive offering. Man offers something of his own property as a sacrifice on the altar of his deity. (2) Man's offering of obedience, justice and righteousness, mercy and love.

This is the ethical way of sacrifice. This was the essence of the prophetic message in the Old Testament. And (3) the sacrifice of a broken spirit--the offering, that is, of the man himself in humility. This is the religious way of sacrifice.52

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ, however, is of wholly different character. "It is God's own sacrifice."53 The sacrifice of Christ is both God's own act of sacrifice and also a sacrifice offered to God.54 Aulen insists that the Anselmic view "develops the latter aspect, and eliminates the former."55

The immorality of substitution.--Despite any concessions that theologians have made toward a truly Biblical Christology, on one point there is no change. The idea of substitution, of vicarious punishment, is immoral! I call to witness three voices from the past, not because things have changed, but because the attitude was formerly expressed more candidly (or crudely) than now. The most cursory perusal of contemporary literature will reveal that the attitude on this point, though expressed with greater refinement, remains unchanged.

Abelard:

Indeed, how cruel and wicked it seems that anyone should demand the blood of an innocent person as the price for anything, or that it should in any way please him that an innocent man should be slain--still less that God should consider the death of his Son so agreeable that by it he should be reconciled to the whole world!56

P. T. Forsyth:

Does God's judgment mean exacting the utmost farthing or suffering? Does it mean that in the hour of his death Christ suffered, compressed into one brief moment, all the pains of hell that the human race deserved? We cannot think about things in that way. God does not work by such equivalents. Let us get rid of that materialistic idea of equivalents. What Christ gave to God was not an equivalent penalty, but an adequate confession of God's holiness, rising from amid extreme conditions of sin.57

Horace Bushnell:

On the whole this matter of contrived compensation to justice which so many take for a gospel, appears to contain about the worst reflexion upon
God's justice that could be stated. . . The justice satisfied is satisfied with an injustice. The penalties threatened, as against wrongdoers are not to be executed on them, because they have been executed on a right-doer! viz., Christ.58

Vicarious punishment on our level would, of course, be a serious miscarriage of justice and indeed immoral. The death of Christ, however, is not strictly analogous to the case of a human judge punishing an innocent third party in the stead of a condemned criminal. At least the analogy dare not be pressed. In the case of Christ's sacrifice there is only one party beside the condemned. He is, "Judge, Wronged Party, King (or Law), and Substitute."59 The case is wholly unique and the same Bible which declares it so to be also declares the impossibility of any other substitutionary atonement apart from this.60

The Relevancy of the Atonement for the Interpretation of Genesis 22

As a result of this inquiry into the problem of human sacrifice certain key factors emerge as guidelines for the interpretation of Genesis 22. Nor do we lack for New Testament warrant in drawing such an analogy. Paul certainly alluded to Abraham's experience in Romans 8:32 where he writes of Christ's sacrifice: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. . . "61

(1) The Biblical record certainly represents Christ's death as a sacrifice and the orthodox Christian community has recognized it as such. Inasmuch as Jesus Christ was indeed the Son of Man, his death is a human sacrifice.

(2) Those who deny that the New Testament use of sacrificial terminology has reference to the Levitical offerings do so on the basis of a distorted concept of the idea of sacrifice.

This distorted concept is in turn due to the gratuitous assumption of the evolutionary development of the institutions of Israel's religion.

(3) To speak of the immorality of God's acting in any particular way is an exhibition of pride which elevates the judgment of man above that of God. Such evaluations make man the standard of universal morality and thereby reveal a wholly inadequate concept of ethics. Man is the measure of all things.

(4) To insist that God could not have demanded the sacrifice of Isaac on moral grounds would lend support to the view that God could not have demanded the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the same reason. Contrariwise, if the death of Jesus Christ is a true sacrifice, what ground is left for denying the possibility of God's demanding the sacrifice of Isaac?62

(5) The fact that Isaac was not put to death in no way alters the analogy for from the viewpoint of both Abraham and God he was already sacrificed and his coming down from the altar was tantamount to a resurrection from the dead. This was the focal point of Abraham's test: He believed that God would raise the son of promise from the dead.64
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THE NATURE OF THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

In light of these considerations we proceed to several lines of argument which support the traditional view that Abraham was instructed and expected to offer Isaac as a whole burnt offering in the usual manner of such sacrifice.

The Divine Origin of the Command

The text of Genesis 22:1 clearly reads: "And Elohim tested Abraham" (translation and underlining are mine). The serious exegete cannot escape the fact that this text teaches the divine origin of the idea for this sacrifice without resorting to a most subjective hermeneutics. By way of contrast, modern interpreters, who do not feel duty bound to protect the reputation of Abraham (or for that matter, of Abraham's God), tend to attribute the idea to Abraham himself. The suggestion that Abraham was only acting in accordance with the custom of his day is quite popular.

Here in the story of Abraham and Isaac there is embedded the fact that once men not only practiced human sacrifice, but did it at what they thought was divine command.

If men worshipping pagan deities could carry their religion to that terrific cost, how could Abraham show that his religion meant as much to him? Only by being willing to go as far as he did.65

In primitive Israelitish religion every first-born male was regarded as the property of Yahweh. . . The story of the sacrifice of Isaac is almost certainly reminiscent of a progress from barbarism to enlightenment.66

We regard as highly improbable the notion that Abraham became aware of this command through the ordinary action of his conscience. Isaac was a miraculous child of divine promise. On him rested the only hope of divine blessing for Abraham and all mankind. He was the sole channel for the ultimate bestowal of eternal salvation. He was therefore to Abraham the charter of his salvation. That Abraham would have himself conceived the idea for Isaac's sacrifice is too great a strain on one's imagination.

The Terms of the Command

Abraham was instructed to "offer him there for a burnt-offering." The verb 'alah means to go up, or ascend; in the hiphil, to cause to go up, and therefore, with respect to sacrifices, to offer. The 'olah is the whole burnt-offering. It goes up in the flame of the altar to God expressing the ascent of the soul in worship. The 'olah is a particular type of sacrifice.

It was the sacrifice that was completely consumed by the fire on the altar. It is significant that the sacrifice of Isaac is not called a minhah (a gift, present, or offering), a more general term that would have more suitably described a so-called "spiritual sacrifice" had that been intended. Neither is it called a zebah, the general name for sacrifices eaten at the feasts. It is not a hata't nor an asam or trespass offering. The sacrifice of Isaac was not intended as a sacrifice for sin. It was an expression of Abraham's own worship and de...
votion to Yahweh. In light of the universal usage of 'olah for a sacrifice that is wholly consumed by fire, it is only reasonable to expect some qualifying phrase if this were not the actual intent.

New Testament Evidence

By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a figure receive him back (Heb. 11:17-19).

Was not Abraham our father justified by works in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? (Jas. 2:21)

From these texts as well as from Gen. 22:12, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me," we learn that from the standpoint of both Abraham and God the sacrifice of Isaac was complete. Abraham had gone far enough that there was no question or doubt that he would complete the sacrifice. God was satisfied. Abraham was so sure of Isaac's death that his coming down from the altar was tantamount to a resurrection from the dead. It is therefore a figure or type of Christ's death and resurrection for, auton kai en parabolai ekomisato. This argument is also sustained by the use of the perfect tense of prosphero in Hebrews 11:17. Pistei prosenanochen Abraam ton Isaak peirazomenos.

Analogy to the Sacrificial Death of Christ

We have endeavored in this study to point out the analogous relationship between the sacrifice of Isaac and the death of Christ as a sacrifice. No interpretation of Genesis 22 can be adequate that fails to consider the Christological and soteriological implications thus involved. An analogy, however, does not bear an exact correspondence to the reality in every detail, else it would cease to be an analogy and become an exact equivalent to the reality.

The sacrifice of Isaac corresponds to "that of Christ in the following respects: (1) They are in both cases the sacrifice by a father of his only son. (2) They both symbolize a complete dedication on the part of the offerer. And (3) they are in both cases a human sacrifice.

On the other hand, no single sacrifice in the Old Testament was sufficient in itself to fully typify the ultimate sacrifice of Christ. Only by a composite view of all the different offerings is Christ's death adequately pictured. The sacrifice of Isaac could never have pictured the most essential idea in the sacrifice of Christ, namely, substitution. Isaac was not an adequate substitute. It is doubtless for this reason that the hand of Abraham was stayed and another "parable" introduced, for the substitution of a ram in the stead of Isaac is certainly an adequate type of a substitute ransom. It is perhaps the clearest illustration of substitution in the whole Old Testament. Thus the two sacrifices taken together complement each other in their respective representation of the death of Christ. The sacrifice of Isaac.
has the merit of adding that dimension which is lacking in all other Old Testament sacrifices, that God's own sacrifice would be a human sacrifice, and beyond that, the Son of the Offerer Himself.

DOCUMENTATION

2. R. A. S. Macalister, "Human Sacrifice: Semitic," Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. James Hastings, VI, 863. This seal is described in detail by Macalister in this article. For another such seal see: The Jewish Encyclopedia, VIII, 653.
4. According to Albright, "The extent to which human sacrifice was practiced among the Canaanites has not been clarified by the discoveries at Ugarit, which nowhere appear to mention it at all." W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 93.
6. The burden of this paper is to demonstrate that human sacrifice per se is an amoral act. Its acquired morality is dependent on the command or prohibition of God.
8. The chief texts are: Jer.7:31, 19:1-13; 32:35; Isa. 57:5; Ezek. 20:31; 23:37.
9. Exod. 20:3. Paul Tillich has accurately observed that the "greater the act of faith or worship offered to an idol, the greater the abomination to the True God. Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), pp. 11ff.
12. Ibid., p. 47.
13. In order to avoid the extreme of hyper-Calvinism, the whole matter of divine election must be viewed in this light. It is not that God elects some men to salvation and some to perdition; but that of all men, already doomed, God has graciously chosen to sovereignly elect some to the joys of salvation.
14. Parallel ideas are expressed in the following texts from the Prophets: Amos 5:21-24; Isa. 1:11; Jer. 6:20; and Mic. 6:6-8.


22. This of course has not been the case inasmuch as recent neo-orthodox theologians have returned to the "classic" or early church view.


24. Both the ransom theory and the commercial theory are "objective" in that they describe an effect secured apart from man which serves as the basis for his reconciliation. "Subjective" theories emphasize the work of Christ in and for the believer.

25. Pelagius denied that man inherited either guilt or a sin-nature from Adam. Every man is as free as Adam. Some men sin: others never do. As Adam was a bad example to influence men to sin, so Christ is a good example to influence men to holiness.


31. Advocates of this view distinguish retributive justice from public justice. Christ's death satisfies the demands of public justice only. For this reason we judge that the governmental theory really reduces to another variation of the moral influence theory. There is no objective ground for God's forgiving of any particular sin.


34. William Hordern, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 203. In reply it should be noted that before the corruption of the Church began under Constantine, theological discussion was largely concerned with the basic issues of the Scriptures, the nature of the Trinity, and the person of Christ. It is no more surprising that the early church had no technical statement of the Atonement than that it had no precise ecclesiology or eschatology.

35. *Ibid.* That is, because it differs from the subjective view of liberalism, which neo-Orthodoxy regards as bad, and also from the objective view of fundamentalism, which neo-orthodoxy regards as impossible!


37. That is, what we more commonly call "neo-orthodoxy."

38. Hordern, *loc. cit.* How interesting that the delay of the church in addressing itself to the problem of the atonement is sufficient warrant to declare that no doctrine of the atonement is final. But the same author has no qualms about denying the truth of propositional revelation--a truth on which the church has spoken and spoken clearly. p. 188.

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1961); 3.
41. Ibid.
43. Ibid., p. 187.
44. Ibid., p. 175, et passim.
45. Ibid., p. 198.
46. See the discussion of Aulen's atonement theory, above.
47. That is, sin, death, and Satan.
49. Mikolaski, op. cit., p. 3.
50. Hordern, op. cit., p. 34.
51. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 122.
55. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 236.
58. Ibid., p. 152.
60. Ibid., p. 148.
61. The Greek expression ouk epheisato (spared not) is the same as the LXX translation in Gen. 22:16 which reads: ouk epheiso tou huriou sou tou agapatou di' eme. The form is aorist middle (deponent) from pheioomai: third person, singular, in Rom. 8; second person, singular, in Gen. 22.
62. This is not to say that the proposed sacrifice of Isaac was in any sense substitutionary or piacular in nature. In this respect Jesus' death is wholly unique.
64. Heb. 11:17

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Looking for Abraham's City

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Hebrews 11:9-10 describes the life of Abraham in the following way: "By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

In alluding to the Old Testament portrayal of Abraham, these verses raise intriguing questions. On what textual basis is Abraham regarded as looking for the city of God? Does this concept find its roots in the biblical record, or has it been imported from some other source? How did the patriarch come to be viewed as a pilgrim?

Though the complete answer to these questions would require a comprehensive examination of all the relevant biblical and extra-biblical Jewish texts, this article is limited to a survey of several key passages in Genesis that may contain potential for significant metaphorical development into the pilgrim imagery of Hebrews 11. It is argued that the presentation of Abraham in Hebrews 11:9-10 may to a large degree be explained as an extrapolation from the language and ordering of the references to Abraham in Genesis.

The Language of the Genesis Texts

GENESIS 12:1-9

Though Abraham is first mentioned in Genesis 11:26-32, it is with Genesis 12 that a new section in the divine program of salvation begins. If Abraham lived in the late third millennium or early second millennium B.C., as the biblical record purports, his migration

1 M. H. Segal notes, "Life in Mesopotamia in the second millennium must have been
would outwardly have been indistinguishable from that of many people who were migrating at that time. The biblical story, however, begins with a directive from God, which differentiates Abraham's journey from that of his contemporaries. The selection of details included in the narrative manifests a clear theological interest. Thus, to seek to limit his travels to what can be geographically traced and sociologically explained fails to give full weight to the specific call by Yahweh that introduces the biblical portrayal of Abraham's trip to Canaan and his subsequent life there. As Speiser remarks, "Abraham's journey to the Promised Land was thus no routine expedition of several hundred miles. Instead, it was the start of an epic voyage in search of spiritual truths, a quest that was to constitute the central theme of all biblical history." The narrative manifests the unusual nature of Abraham's movement to Canaan.

The story of Abraham begins with a promise that introduces the patriarchal age. Abraham's journey begins simply as a response to the word of God. In fact the original command in 12:1 makes no mention of the identity of the land, nor even that the land was to be given to him. God's promises in verses 2-3, reiterated and enlarged to the patriarchs throughout the Genesis narratives, became the theological nexus for much of the Old Testament literature.

intolerable to a believer in the One God. The whole life of society and of the individual was strictly regulated on the principles of a crass polytheism and demonology, governed by a multitude of priests, diviners and magicians under the rule of the great temples and their hierarchies. There was no room in that Mesopotamia for an individual who could not join in the worship and in the magical practices of his fellows. Abraham must have felt early the pressing need to remove himself from such a stifling environment" (The Pentateuch: Its Composition and Its Authorship and Other Biblical Studies [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967], p. 128).


The divine word of command, גּירָם, calls Abram to an abrupt and cataclysmic change in location and pattern of life. The call was to go from (גּירָם) his most fundamental loyalties to (לֹא) a destination that is indicated in the vaguest of terms. In essence, Yahweh was requiring Abram to obey, knowing the full price involved, but with only a hint as to the compensation. The divine demand was that Abram should forsake the familiar for the foreign.7

It is evident from Genesis 11 that Abram was a member of an intimate family structure. His homeland of Ur had a highly developed culture, far superior to that of Canaan.8 Thus Abram did not migrate to Canaan in search of a settled home, but he was called to leave his "secure home and to exchange it for a very unsettled existence in the far-away and strange land of Canaan."9

The form of the divine command did little to mitigate the personal anguish involved in such a relocation. In three parallel prepositional phrases introduced by גָּאָרָם, Abram's departure moves from the general (גָּאָרָם "from your country") to the specific (גָּאָרָם בְּשָׁם "from your father's house") with ever-increasing personal identification.10 As Liebowitz points out, this sequence is contrary to what would be expected, for the logical sequence is that one first leaves his home, then his birthplace, and after that his country. She concurs with early Jewish commentators that what is being suggested by the passage is "a spiritual rather than physical withdrawal, beginning with the periphery and ending with the inner core."11

God called Abram to go from Mesopotamia, and He also enjoined him to go "to the land which I will show you." Brueggemann maintains that "land is a central, if not the central theme of biblical faith. Biblical faith is a pursuit of historical belonging that includes a sense of destiny derived from such belonging."12 Abram's re-

8 Bruce Vawter succinctly traces the history and describes the culture of Ur-III (On Genesis: A Neap Reading [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977], p. 171).
10 A similar progression in intensity may be noted in the divine call in Genesis 22:2 for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. It may be significant that the command for the Agedah is also phrased גָּאָרָם גָּאָרָם. As in 12:4 the command was followed by explicit, unquestioning obedience.
12 W. Brueggemann, The Land, Overtures to Biblical Theology (London: SPCK, 1978), p. 3. The magisterial study by W. D. Davies traces the theme of the land throughout the biblical corpus (The Gospel and the Land [Berkeley: University of California, 1974]). Other useful studies include W. D. Davies, The Territorial Dimension of Judaism (Berkeley: University of California, 1982); G. Strecker, ed., Das Land
response to Yahweh's call and the divine promise of land, name, and blessing (vv. 2-3) set the tone both for the patriarchal history and for the rest of biblical literature.13

God's command in verse 1 was matched by the record in verse 4 of Abram's obedience. No mention is made of any objection, question, or delay.14 As the narrative stands, Abram is portrayed as explicitly obeying the word of God.15 Three items are noted in verse 4, all of which prove crucial in the larger narrative. The action is defined as being in accord with (τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ θεοῦ) the word of Yahweh.16 The mention of Lot anticipates the theme of the problem of an heir, which is prevalent throughout the Abrahamic narratives.17 Abram's advanced age (then 75), along with the statement of Sarai's barrenness in 11:30, serves to accentuate the magnitude of his obedience in the face of scant human prospects.

Verse 5 makes particular the general description in the previous verse. The destination of the trip is stated proleptically by the narrator as Canaan, though in the account it was not disclosed as such to Abram until verse 7. The enumeration of those whom Abram took with him, from Sarai his wife to the purchased slaves (“the persons which they had acquired in Haran”),18 serves to highlight the rad-


14 G. von Rad comments: "Abraham obeys blindly and without objection. The one word wayyelek ('and he set out') is more effective than any psychological description could be, and in its majestic simplicity does greater justice to the importance of this event" (Genesis: A Commentary, 3d rev. ed. [London: SCM Press, 19721, p. 161).

15 This point must not be pressed, however, for Hebrew narrative is characteristi-
cally laconic. The lack of detail is a chief provocation for midrash, such as detailed 
by L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, 7 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1913-67), 1:205. But as H. Gunkel notes, the details that are 
presented are of special significance: "He does not share the modern point of view, 
that the most interesting and worthy theme for art is the soul-life of man; his child-
like taste is fondest of the outward, objective facts. And in this line his achievements 
are excellent. He has an extraordinary faculty for selecting just the action which is 
most characteristic for the state of feeling of his hero" (The Legends of Genesis, p. 61).


18 Jewish midrash viewed these individuals as proselytes whom Abram and Sarai 
had converted in Haran (Gen. Rab. 39.14).
cial relocation involved in Abram's decision of obedience. Nothing was left behind should the venture fail, but Abram followed the word of Yahweh without reserve into the unknown.

Verses 6-9 trace the initial travels of Abram within the land of Canaan, which Yahweh then gave to his offspring (v. 7). Abram is portrayed as moving through the land from Shechem (v. 6) to Bethel (v. 8) and eventually toward the Negev (v. 9). This progression can be viewed from several perspectives. Yeivin relates it to the political and economic necessities of seminomadism in the patriarchal times.\(^{19}\) Cassuto views the journeys throughout Canaan in light of God's land gift stated in verse 7. Comparing Abram's movements to the inaugural tour of Jacob later in Genesis, Cassuto says, "In the same way, Abram's passage across the land of Canaan from north to south represents the ideal transfer of the country to his possession for the purpose of the Lord's service. He was like a man who has acquired a field and inspects it from end to end."\(^{20}\)

It is evident that the narrator was setting the action within a theological context. The site at which the land promise was given is specified in three ways in verse 6. The name of the place was Shechem, a city in the heart of the land that later became a place of assembly for Israel (cf. Josh. 24:1).\(^{21}\) At this location was also the oak of Moreh, a center of pagan worship. Moreover, the Canaanites were in the land Yahweh was giving to Abram's seed (not to Abram himself), thus shifting actual possession of the land into the future. This juxtaposition of divine utterance and incomplete human awareness or appropriation parallels the call of Abram in verse 1 and demands the same quality of unquestioning obedience and trusting anticipation. Von Rad notes that "Abraham is therefore brought by God into a completely unexplained relationship with the Canaanites, and Yahweh does not hurry about solving and explaining this opaque status of ownership as one expects the director of history to do."\(^{22}\)

Throughout the pericope the narrator was careful to focus only on Abram's activities without discussing the motivation that

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22 Von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary, p. 166.
prompted them. However, the response of Abram to both God's call and His promise clearly indicates that his reason for migrating to Canaan was his dedication to Yahweh and His service. This observation is supported by the structure of verses 7-8, in which Abram is described as building altars for Yahweh. In verse 7 the divine promise, "To your descendants I will give this land," is followed by the response, "So he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him." The physical activities in the first half of verse 8 are preparatory to the spiritual activities in the second half. Thus Abram manifested a spiritual motivation in settling at Bethel by building an altar to Yahweh and by calling on His name.

It may then be concluded that Genesis 12:1-9 contains substantial theological potential that could be developed into a pilgrim ideology. Abram's unquestioning obedience to Yahweh's call and his response to the divine land grant to his offspring manifest a significant perspective dimension in the narrative. Though presented as sober history, transcending the literal level of the action is the presentation of a man who heeded the word of Yahweh to leave all that was familiar to venture out to an unspecified location, which later was given not to him but to his descendants. To this command Abram responded in obedience and worship.

**GENESIS 17:1**

The divine command, "Walk before Me, and be blameless" (חָלָל בְּפִי אֱלֹהִים וְהָיָה צְרִיכִי), bears unmistakable theological overtones. Von Rad notes that what is being commanded is Abram's complete, unqualified surrender of his life to God. It may thus be said that

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23 Cassuto points out that "what the Bible does not say expressly it indicates by inference. It is a characteristic of these narratives ... not to describe the thoughts and feelings of the *dramatis personae*, but only to record their deeds, and to inform the reader through the narration of events of the ideas and sentiments that prompted their actions" (*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2:303).

24 This is reflected in Jewish tradition, as summarized by L. Ginzberg. "Each altar raised by him was a centre for his activities as a missionary. As soon as he came to a place in which he desired to sojourn, he would stretch a tent first for Sarah, and next for himself, and then he would proceed at once to make proselytes and bring them under the wings of the Shekinah. Thus he accomplished his purpose of inducing all men to proclaim the name of God" (*The Legends of the Jews*, 1:219).

25 Interpretive development in a metaphorical direction is evident in Philo De Migr. Abr.

26 Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, pp. 198-99, and supported by Aquila's τέλειος for ἐπίθετον. Thus Jubilees 23:10 reads, "For Abraham was perfect in all his actions with the Lord and was pleasing through righteousness all the days of his life." Cf. Zadokite Fragments 7.5 and Philo *Quaest. et Sol. in Gen.* III 40, who stated that "a character which pleases God does not incur blame, while one who is blameless and faultless in all things is altogether pleasing [to God]." This reading is also followed by Jerome *Against the Pelagians* 3.12.
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is the reality of which is the figure. It should be noted, however, that much Jewish translation and exegesis renders in relation to the subsequent circumcision of Abraham.27

In the highly covenantal language of the passage,28 God promised Abraham (his name was changed in 17:5), "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings [אֶרֶץ], all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (v. 8). As in 12:7 the land would be possessed not by Abraham but only by his descendants. For Abraham, Canaan would be only a land of sojournings, not a possessed home. Thus as Klein points out, it is "recognized that the patriarchs never really occupied the land as owners."29

Moreover, the evident allusion to Enoch (Gen. 5:22, 24) and Noah (6:9) must be accounted for. As Enoch had walked with God and had been translated from his society into the divine presence, and as Noah had walked with God and been delivered from divine judgment on his sinful culture, so Abraham was commanded to walk before God. It is recognizable then that Abraham was being called to a relationship with God that by its very orientation would cause him to be differentiated from his human society.

GENESIS 23:4

Genesis 2330 is crucial31 for understanding the socio-political concept of Abraham the sojourner and the background of the later metaphorical concept of spiritual pilgrimage. The occasion for the transaction here recorded is Sarah's death. Though God had promised Abraham the entire land of Canaan, the patriarch had not yet come into possession of even enough ground for a burial site for his wife.

The legal setting of the pericope in which "preoccupation with the problem of ownership determines every stage, every detail of

27 Cf. Gen. Rab. 46.4; Tg. Ps.-J.; Tg. Neof.; b. Ned. 31b-32a; y. Ned. 3.11; t. Ned. 2.5.
30 H. Hahn gives a useful discussion of the interpretation of Genesis 23 in the later rabbinic literature (Wallfahrt und Auferstehung zur inessianischen Zeit: Eine robbiische Homilie zion Neumond-Shtabat (Pes R 1), Frankforter Judaistische Studien 5 [Frankfort am Main, 19791, pp. 156-70).
31 Thus J. G. Vink says of Genesis 23, "The text is important for ... because it tells about the primitiae of the possession of the land and the beginning of the fulfilment of the divine promise" ("The Date and Origin of the Priestly Code in the Old Testament," Old Testament Studies 15 [1969]: 91).
the negotiation,"32 is determinative for Abraham's self-description, "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you" (23:4). The issue involved more than mere title to a plot of land. At stake is "whether Abraham was to gain a permanent foothold or not"33 in Canaanite society.

When read in isolation, Genesis 23 fits comfortably in the legal or commercial domain. However, in its literary context in the Abrahamic narratives and in the biblical corpus, theological implications emerge. As Coats remarks, "the unit itself draws no theological consequence from the acquisition," 34 but when seen in the light of the reiterated land promise to Abraham, the purchase of even a burial site becomes the earnest of the ultimate fulfillment.35 The positioning of this transaction between the sacrifice of his heir in chapter 22 and the securing of a wife for Isaac (thus providing for the perpetuation of the covenant family) in chapter 24 hints at the prospective nature of Abraham's purchase. Nevertheless to posit an explicit metaphorical meaning to א־בְּרִי־לָשֶׁנִּי exceeds the dimensions of this context.

The Ordering of the Genesis Texts

This section examines the relationship of Genesis 12-25, particularly 12:1-3, to the primeval narratives in Genesis 1-11. The literary arrangement will be analyzed to determine to what extent later Jewish and Christian writers may have derived the metaphorical concept of pilgrimage from the ordering of the narratives in Genesis.


Several factors justify the examination of the traditional text as a legitimate focus in biblical study: (1) It is the only objectively available text, in contrast with the speculative reconstructions of source criticism. (2) The accepted text is the corpus which shaped later tradition in Judaism and Christianity. (3) The juxtaposition of accounts can produce "unexpected narrative connections and theological insights" so that the literary whole is a sum greater than its parts. Indeed, these collocations bear evidence of logical or theological intention. (4) The relevance of the synthetic approach is confirmed by Jewish midrashic exegesis, which seeks to explain the juxtaposition of texts. Thus the conclusion by Sawyer is apposite:

The original meaning of the final form of the text is a concept which not only permits fruitful study of a clearly defined corpus of lexical data, but also provides an obvious starting-point for theological discussion, since it was the final form of the text, not its separate component parts.

36 James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM Press, 1973), pp. 163-64. R. Smend, in assessing the work of Childs, states, "Generations of scholars have seen their primary task as the reconstruction of the oldest written texts and, as far as possible, the oral forms that preceded them. The further such work continues, the greater the danger of its becoming speculation. So it is not only understandable, but also appropriate, if the focus of analysis is now, by way of reaction, the end of the process of tradition, i.e., the final written form of the material. This is not only a neglected and hence a fertile field, but also a more certain one, since the finalised texts are not imaginary entities. Here we are less under the influence of speculations, but can make observations on material that clearly lies before us, and are often also in a position to prove and disprove" ("Questions about the Importance of the Canon in an Old Testament Introduction," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 [1980]: 45-46).


39 M. H. Segal, "The Composition of the Pentateuch: A Fresh Examination," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8 (1961): 95. However, R. N. Whybray issues a salutary caution: "While there is undoubtedly a continuous narrative thread, this is often extremely thin, and the various incidents described are frequently joined together only very loosely" (*The Making of the Pentateuch* [Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1987], p. 14). One then must be cautious in interpreting the juxtapositions of the extant text as deliberate collocations intended to teach explicit principles.


that was canonized in all the religious communities for which it is an authoritative religious text.42

LITERARY INTEGRATION IN GENESIS 11-12

Though a division between the primeval history (Gen. 1-11) and the patriarchal history (Gen. 12-50) has often been made, a careful reading of Genesis 11-12 reveals a significant degree of continuity between the two sections. To be sure, Abram was called to a new phase of life in 12:1, but he and his family are introduced in chapter 11. The elaborate transitional passage in 11:10-32 compels the reader of the canonical text43 to view the patriarchal history in some relationship with the primeval history.44 Von Rad explains this conjunction in terms of aetiology, in that the meaning of the call of Abram is expounded in the primeval history. He concludes, "Indeed, because of this welding of primeval history and saving history, the whole of Israel's saving history is properly to be understood with reference to the unsolved problem of Jahweh's relationship to the nations."45

In the interpretive process the combination of Genesis 1-11 and Genesis 12 has a sum greater than the constitutive parts.46 Certain motifs present in both literary blocks are thus brought to the fore as key themes in the extant form.47 By this juxtaposition, potential for interpretive correlations is created that might not have occurred to the reader had the individual passages remained as discrete units.


43 The juxtaposition of Genesis 11 and 12 finds unanimous attestation in all the ancient sources, including the Masoretic Text, SP, Targums, and the Septuagint, and it can justifiably be maintained that the early Jewish and Christian writers would have had before them this arrangement of texts. Thus at least in this specific case, a canonical approach is warranted. J. M. Sasson argues well for the validity of both analytic and synthetic study of the biblical texts ("The 'Tower of Babel' as a Clue to the Redactional Structuring of the Primeval History [Gen. 1-11:9]," in The Bible World, ed. G. Rendsburg et al. [New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1980], p. 213).

44 D. J. A. Clines, The Theme of the Pentateuch (Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1978), pp. 77-78.


46 The interpretive potential latent in the literary arrangement of Pentateuchal texts is frequently exploited by the Targums, as Targum du Pentateuque notes with numerous examples (ed. R. le Deaut, SC 240 [Paris: Cerf, 19781, pp. 54-55).

GENESIS 12:1-3 AS A RESPONSE TO GENESIS 1-11

It is evident from the divine call to Abram in Genesis 12:1 that the focus has narrowed from the more universal scope of chapters 1-11. The primeval narratives trace the spiritual degeneration of the human race as a whole by means of the recurrent pattern of human sin and divine punishment. But the story of Abraham also has a universal dimension, for the ultimate result of the blessing on the patriarch is that all families of the earth will be blessed (12:3), in essence a reformation of creation. The positioning of Genesis 12 immediately after the primeval narratives suggests that "the election of Israel in some way must be the answer to the plight of man."51

The land promise in 12:7 is a reversal of the pattern of expulsion that dominates Genesis 3-11. Dispersion or homelessness is manifested in Adam and Eve's removal from Eden (3:23-24), the curse on Cain (4:16), and the scattering of Babel (11:8), but it is strikingly reversed in the divine call of Abram. As Fishbane suggests, Abram is in a sense a new Adam, in whom is hope for the renewal of human life in history.53 Though Eden could not be regained by human means, divine grace to Abram gives the prospect of the restoration of the land, fertility, and blessing lost by the human parents.54

The primeval narratives relate the tragic story of nearly unmit-

49 R. Martin-Achard states, "Gen. XII.3 has universalistic implications. The Patriarch is the instrument by which Yahweh is seeking to save all mankind. His promise to Abraham is the answer to the curse of the dispersion of the human race (Gen. XI.7ff.) and determines the whole destiny of Israel and the world; henceforth history is going to unfold under the sign of that blessing which is offered to all peoples through Abraham and his descendants" (A Light to the Nations [London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962], p. 36).
54 Ibid., p. 112. The biblical solution to the problem in Genesis 1-11 is in sharp contrast with that given in the Old Babylonian Atrahasis epic, which finds an urban solution to the threat of extinction. Despite formal similarities between the two accounts the ideologies are different from one another. Cf. I. M. Kidawada, "Literary Convention of the Primaeval History," Anneal of the Japanese Biblical Institute 1 (1975): 7-13.
igated human disobedience and failure. Though there are exceptions like Abel, Enoch, and Noah, more characteristic is the observation in 6:5 that man's thoughts were "only evil continually." Instead of submitting to God, man in his hubris\textsuperscript{55} refused to obey the divine standards, and consequently he brought on himself repeated judgment.

Throughout the first 11 chapters of Genesis the motif of cursing, or crime and punishment,\textsuperscript{56} is dominant. From the fall onward, sinful humanity is justly under the curse of God. Five times in the primeval history the divine curse is pronounced on the sin-tainted creation (3:14, 17; 4:11; 5:29; 9:25).\textsuperscript{57} This repeated theme sets the stage for the call of Abram to be the mediator of God's blessing to the world\textsuperscript{58} Thus Genesis 1-11 and Genesis 12:1-3 are structured as problem and solution.\textsuperscript{59} Wolff notes, "The so-called primal history explains in advance why all the families of the earth need blessing. This is disclosed in retrospect by 12:3b as its hidden, leading question (Leitfrage)."\textsuperscript{60} In the patriarchal narratives blessing becomes the recurrent chord\textsuperscript{61} as the divine answer to the human dilemma caused by sin. The motive for this blessing is the grace of God. In the primeval narratives after each occasion of judgment there is a gracious opportunity.\textsuperscript{62} The grace extended after the dispersion of the nations (11:1-9) is the blessing mediated through Abram and his seed.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{56} C. Westermann, \textit{Die Verheissungen an die Väter} (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1976), p. 47.
\textsuperscript{58} W. Zimmerli reasons: "The Yahwist wants to make clear by the shape of his narrative that here a turning point is reached. The persistence with which the key-word 'blessing-to bless' occurs no less than five times in both of the quoted verses [Gen 12:2-3] is intended to ensure that we realize that here the shift from the curse upon the world to blessing upon it is taking place" (\textit{Man and His Hope in the Old Testament} [London: SCM Press, 1971], p. 50).
\textsuperscript{60} H W. Wolff, "The Kerygma of the Yahwist," \textit{Interpretation} 20 (1964): 145.
\textsuperscript{62} Clines, \textit{The Theme of the Pentateuch}, p. 65.
RECURRENT MOTIFS IN GENESIS 11 AND 12

It has been demonstrated that the call of Abram stands in organic connection with the primeval narratives. This significant canonical arrangement is even more apparent when Genesis 12 is viewed in relationship with the preceding chapter. Several factors emerge that bear on the use of Abraham as a pilgrim figure, in particular as he is depicted in Hebrews 11:8-16.

The call of Abram is set firmly in conjunction with the תודעה in Genesis 11:10-32. The narrator in tracing the line of Shem arrives at Abram and his wife Sarai and then adds cryptically in 11:30, "And Sarai was barren; she had no child." Sarna points out that this detail along with several other notices in the passage serves to introduce information in the subsequent Abrahamic narratives.64 If chapters 11 and 12-50 were not intended to be read together, the details in the תודעה would be superfluous. Their inclusion, however, is intended to inform the reader of a crucial theme. Though the point must not be pressed too far, the fact stands that the biblical texts often present barrenness as preparatory to divine intervention in blessing.65 In the narrative of Genesis, if Abram and Sarai are to have any future, the problem of barrenness will have to be overcome. This then sets the stage for the divine promise of a seed.66

Because the תודעה introducing the genealogy culminating in Abram follows immediately after the incident of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9, it is not surprising that common strands may be detected between the call of Abram and the corporate building and consequent dispersion.67 The stated motivation for the construction of

65 Cf. the examples of Rebekah (Gen. 25:21), Rachel (Gen. 30:1), Samson's mother (Judg. 13:2), Hannah (1 Sam. 1:2), and Elizabeth (Luke 1:7).
66 Genesis 12:2; 13:15-16; 15:4-5; 17:4-8, 19; fulfilled in 21:1-3. M. Sternberg points out that the dual references to Sarai's barrenness (11:30) and the divine promise of a seed (12:2) at the beginning of the Abrahamic narratives set the stage for the subsequent stories. Thus "each new development ... sharpens the non sequitur between God's promise and Abraham's plight" (The Poetics of Biblical Narrative, Indiana Literary Biblical Series [Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana, 19851, p. 148).
67 J. R. Lundbom relates Genesis 11:1-9 and 12:1-3 to 2 Samuel 7 ("Abraham and David in the Theology of the Yahwist," The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth, ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Conner [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983], p. 204). He speculates, "2 Samuel 7—with its message about what kind of house Yahweh really wants provides the Yahwist with, just the inspiration he needs to complete the transition from primeval to patriarchal history. It leads him to juxtapose the Tower of Babel story and the Call of Abraham, and in doing so he is able to render a theolog-
Babel was the desire for social unity and greatness (11:4), but its frustration led to social fragmentation. The divine plan was that in Abraham all the families of the earth should be blessed (12:3).

This general correspondence between Abram and Babel is specified in the motifs of name and city. As Kaiser notes, the driving ambition of the builders was the quest for a name, or renown. But to Abram (12:2), "God now grants that which men had tried to gain by their own resources, but to the man of His choice and on His terms." Yahweh's gracious blessing on Abram answers the self-seeking ambitions of Babel.

The exposition of Abraham's pilgrimage of faith in Hebrews 11:8-16 highlights the notion that he was seeking "the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (v. 10). The narratives of Abraham in Genesis give no hint to this. However, the juxtaposition of the call of Abram with the building of a city in Genesis 11:1-9 provides a plausible biblical matrix for the assertion in Hebrews. The builders of Babel sought to build for themselves a city and a tower whose top would reach into heaven. Their aspirational judgment about 'hoar antiquity' that comes very close to being the same as one already contained in the Court History."

68 Josephus forges a connection between Nimrod, the Flood, and Babel (Antiquities of the Jews 1.113-15).
69 Cf. R. B. Laurin, "The Tower of Babel Revisited," in Biblical and Near Eastern Studies, ed. G. A. Tuttle (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 144-45. Augustine commented, "And that celebrated tower which was built to reach to heaven was an indication of this arrogance of spirit; and the ungodly men concerned in it justly earned the punishment of having not their minds only, but their tongues besides, thrown into confusion and discordance" (On Christian Doctrine 2.4).
71 Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, p. 86.
72 J. J. M. Navone, "The Patriarchs of Faith, Hope and Love," Revue de l'université d'Ottawa 34 (1964): 340. Lundbom writes, "'Making a name' means one thing in 11:4 but quite another in 12:2. In the Babel story men seek a name by erecting a city within which there is a religious temple.... Abraham, however, will achieve his name by having a myriad of descendants. These will become a great nation which no doubt is what the men of Babel are also striving for as they set out to build their city" (Abraham and David in the Theology of the Yahwist," p. 205).
75 כ.ג can be used both for the visible sky and for the abode of God (Francis Brown,
rations were dashed, however, when Yahweh confused their language, so that "they stopped building the city" (v. 8). But from that very geographical area, from Ur of the Chaldeans, Yahweh called Abram to begin the quest for a different kind of city, not a city to reach up to God, but a city which has been constructed by God.

**Conclusion**

Several conclusions may be drawn from the analysis of the texts in Genesis referring to Abraham. First, the specific texts that speak of Abraham's movements are presented as historical narratives, but emerging from the stories are frequent theological overtones. Second, the ordering of the Abrahamic narratives in the biblical corpus serves the theological function of providing the divine solution to the problem of sin in Genesis 1-11. Third, the motif of the city of God for which Abraham sought as expressed in Hebrews 11:9-10 can plausibly be taken to have a possible derivation from the collocation of the narratives of the Tower of Babel and the call of Abram in Genesis 11 and 12.

It would be claiming more than the evidence will sustain to insist that the Christian metaphor of spiritual pilgrimage is derived solely from the Genesis narratives of Abraham. Nevertheless the presence of metaphorical implications in the language and ordering of the narratives is at times already confirmed by the early Jewish writings and by the ancient versions. Therefore the early Christian concept of spiritual pilgrimage evidenced in Hebrews 11:9-10 can be explained reasonably as in part an extrapolation from the metaphorical intimations in the Genesis texts.


77 The debated question of the location of Abram when he received the call in Genesis 12:1-3 (cf. Acts 7:2-4) is of little consequence on this point. What is of paramount significance is that his original domicile was regarded as Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 11:28, 31; 15:7; Neh. 9:7). Fishbane notes with reference to Genesis 11:1-9: "This final episode of the Primeval Cycle is thus a bathetic re-expression of the alienation of man from order and harmony when his orientation is not God-centered.... But the ironic mask of tragedy also smiles: the episode is double-edged, and unfolds its own reversal. For it is from this Babylon, from Ur, that Abraham separates for a new land" ("The Sacred Center: The Symbolic Structure of the Bible," p. 13).
79 The controversial question as to the historicity of the patriarchal narratives is not the issue here. The presentation of Abraham is effected by means of the genre of historical narrative. The veracity of the narrative presentation is a question separate from the description of the literary phenomena.
WHAT IS THE WOMAN'S DESIRE?

SUSAN T. FOH

THE current issue of feminism in the church has provoked the reexamination of the scriptural passages that deal with the relationship of the man and the woman. A proper understanding of Genesis 3:16 is crucial to this reconsideration of the Biblical view of the woman. In Genesis 3:16 God pronounces judgment on the woman. Two areas of the woman's life are specifically mentioned: childbearing and her relationship to her husband. The latter is the concern of this article; "yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Gen. 3:16b, RSV)

A. Common Interpretations

The translation of הָנֵלָשׁת causes a large part of the difficulty in understanding Genesis 3.16. There are three typical interpretations. (1) הָנֵלָשׁת is frequently equated with sexual desire. The woman's craving for her husband will be so strong that to satisfy it she will be ready to face all the pains and sorrows of childbearing. "... thy desire shall be to thy husband--thou shalt not be able to shun great pain and peril for childbearing, for thy desire, thy appetite, shall be to thy husband..." 2 The woman still desires marital intercourse though the result, conceiving, and bearing children, brings pain. This interpretation closely links verse 16b with verse 16a (as does the RSV rendering of the waw as "yet," which could be translated "and"), and so fits the immediate context.

(2) הָנֵלָשׁת is viewed as "the desire that makes her the willing

slave of man." It is that "immense, clinging, psychological de-
pendence on man." Seeing no reason to limit the scope of
"desire" to sexual appetite, Clarence J. Vos would not exclude
from it the woman's desire for the man's protection. Keil and
Delitzsch see "desire" as a morbid yearning; the woman ". . . was
punished with a desire bordering upon disease (πλίστη from πλεον

to run, to have a violent craving for a thing) . . ."

(3) Calvin states that Genesis 3:16b means that the woman
will desire only what her husband desires and that she will have
no command over herself. The woman's desires are wholly sub-
servient to her husband's, as a result of God's judgment.

Despite the differences in the interpretation of πλίστη, all of
the commentators cited above agree that, through the woman's
desire for her husband, he rules her. In other words, because
the woman desires the husband in some way, he is able to rule
over her.

B. Objections to the Preceding Interpretations

(1) The interpretation of πλίστη as sexual desire appears to be
contradicted by etymology. Biblical scholars are well aware of
the danger of confusing diachrony and synchrony in the use of
this tool, but all sources of help must be weighed when there
are only three occurrences of the word. The verbal root appears

3 John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis
(International Critical Commentary), Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1930,
p.82.

4 Gini Andrews, Your Half of the Apple; God and the Single Girl,

5 Clarence J. Vos, Woman in Old Testament Worship, Delft, N. V.

6 C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten
Volumes, V. 1: The Pentateuch, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans

7 John Calvin, Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis,

8 Cf. U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part 1, Jeru-
usalem, The Magnes Press, 1961, p. 165, and Edward J. Young, Genesis 3:
A Devotional and Expository Study, London, Banner of Truth Trust,
1966, p. 127.

9 As J. Barr also recognizes; "Etymology and the Old Testament,
to be בָּשָׂ for which BDB suggests three homographs. BDB would relate בָּשָׂ to the Arabic root saqa, to desire, excite desire.\(^{10}\) However, as they are aware, the phonemic equivalent of the Hebrew s is s in Arabic, a fact recognized by G. R. Driver\(^{11}\) and Koehler-Baumgartner.\(^{12}\) This suggests that the proper etymology in Arabic would be saqa, to urge, drive on, impel,\(^{13}\) a meaning consonant with the interpretation to be argued below.

(2) The rule of the husband, per se, is not a result of or punishment for sin. The headship of the husband over his wife is a part of the creation order. The commentators have dealt with this problem in two ways. The one ignores or misunderstands the New Testament interpretation of the creation order.\(^{14}\) It is suggested that before the fall, man and woman were equal and that neither ruled.

... and he shall rule over thee, though at their creation both were formed with equal rights, and the woman had probably as much right to rule as the man: but subjection to the will of her husband is one part of her curse.\(^{15}\)

Language and Meaning (Oudtestamenische Studien, Deel 19), Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1974, p. 2.


12 Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1953. KB recognizes the derivation as from saqa by their distinguishing only two verbal roots, p. 957. One must suspect that the major influence which made BDB willing to contradict the usual phonemic equivalence and associate בָּשָׂ with the Arabic saqa was the notion that בָּשָׂ was a reference to sexual desire. The sounder lexicography may have been overruled by a commitment to the understanding of the passage.


14 I Corinthians 11:8: I Timothy 2:13a. The source of and reason for the creation of the woman is significant. Man is created first; he is the source of the woman's existence: and she is created for the sake of the man. Therefore, the head of the woman is man,

15 Clarke, p. 22,
The other more frequent method of dealing with this problem is to differentiate between the husband's God-ordained headship and his "rule" in Genesis 3:16. The woman was subordinate to her husband from the beginning, but the "supremacy of the man was not intended to become a despotic rule, crushing the woman into a slave. . ." as it does after the fall. Before the fall, man's rule was gentle; afterwards it is tyrannous. Rule (מל xxxx) in Genesis 3:16 is said to suggest suppressing or overcoming. Not all agree that the post-fall rule of man is different in quality. Some have suggested it is different only in extent; after the fall, the woman is wholly subject to her husband (causing one to wonder what the pre-fall limits on the husband's authority were). This total subjection of the woman makes her liable to arbitrary treatment by her husband; so the complete rule of the husband can lead to a reign of tyranny. Practically, then, there is no difference in the rule of worse quality and that of greater extent.

(3) The preceding solution satisfies the demands of the overall context, i.e., the tyrannous rule of the husband seems an appropriate punishment for the woman's sin. However, if the woman's desire makes her a willing slave of her husband (A.2) or if she has no desires except for husband's (A.3), the hardship of punishment in Genesis 3:16b is absent, because the woman willingly submits herself to her husband's rule. But willing submission contradicts the context of judgment and clashes with the New Testament commands to submit to the husband's authority (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; I Pet. 3:1), as well as experience.

C. Genesis 3:16b and Genesis 4:7b

ходит טות occurs only three times in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:16; 4:7; Song of Solomon 7:10).

A comparison of Genesis 3:16b and 4:7b reveals that the

17 Vos, p. 25.
18 Keil & Delitzsch, p. 83.
19 Because the context of Song of Solomon 7: 10 is ambiguous, it is not possible to determine the precise meaning ofходит טות in this case. We shall only suggest that the meaning of "desire" proposed in this article is credible in Song of Solomon 7:10. Note that the immediate context is that of possession: "I am my beloved's. . ."
Hebrew is the same, except for appropriate changes in person and gender; but the English translation (RSV, ASV) varies.\textsuperscript{20}

\begin{itemize}
\item RSV . . . Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" \textsuperscript{21} \\
 its [sin's] desire is for you, but you [Cain] must master it.
\item ASV . . . and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. . . and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it.
\end{itemize}

In Genesis 4:7 sin's desire is to enslave Cain -- to possess or control him, but the Lord commands, urges Cain to overpower

\textsuperscript{20} KJV translated them the same: in Gen. 4:7, "... and thou shalt rule over him." The problem is that Cain does not in fact rule, whether the antecedent of "him" is sin or Abel. Therefore, the future indicative or predictive translation of Gen. 4:7 is incorrect.

\textsuperscript{21} The masculine pronouns refer to the feminine noun "sin" ימלשׁה. A. R. Hulst in \textit{Old Testament Problems} (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1960, p. 1) says: "The Hebr. active part. robes, 'beseiger', is often used of an animal that lies in wait for its prey. . . . It is quite possible then, that the writer's use of the masc. suffixes has been determined by this mental image of 'the croucher'." Cf. Robert S. Candlish, \textit{The Book of Genesis}, v. 1, Edinburgh, Adam & Charles Black, 1868, p. 99; G. R. Driver, p. 158; Keil & Delitzsch, p. 112. The only other alternate antecedent for the masc. pronouns is Abel; then the rule of Cain as the first born is in view. This interpretation is unlikely because (1) "Abel" is distant from the pronouns and does not occur in God's words to Cain but only in the preceding narrative; (2) it is not conclusive that the first born ruled his younger siblings; for instance, rule over his brothers is given to the supposed first born only at the death-bed of Isaac, and it is given to the second born Jacob by mistake (Gen. 27:29); and (3) what is the meaning of "desire" in such a case? Calvin (p. 203-4) explains the desire of Abel for Cain as that of an inferior for the superior, in this case the first born Cain. "Moreover, this form of speech is common [?] among the Hebrews, that the desire of the inferior should be towards him to whose will he is subject; thus Moses speaks of the woman (iii.16) that her desire should be to her husband." Calvin's interpretation of "desire" in Gen. 3: 16 and Gen 4:7 is consistent, but it is not appropriate in Song of Solomon 7:10, where the man's desire is to his beloved. According to Calvin's theory, the man would then be the inferior.
sin, to master it. An active struggle between Cain and sin is implied; the victor of the struggle is not determined by the words God speaks to Cain.
E. J. Young notes the similarity of language in Genesis 3:16 and 4:7 but fails to account for it.

As we examine the language of the Lord, we note that it is capable of two interpretations. First of all, however, it is well to compare it with the similar language in Genesis 4:7. In that verse we read, 'and his desire is unto thee.' The meaning in this context of the fourth chapter is that what sin desires is what Cain will carry out. His desire is unto Cain in the sense that Cain is a slave thereto, and must perform whatever sin's desire may be. In the present verse Gen. 3:16 we may render, 'and unto thy husband is thy desire.' It is obvious that the meaning here is the reverse of what it was in the fourth chapter. Is it not clear that in this third chapter the meaning cannot be that the desire of the woman is unto the husband so that he must do what she wishes? Is it not clear that the woman is not here pictured as a despot who compels the man to do the thing she desires? Plainly this is not the meaning of the text.22

The above argument relies on certain presuppositions about the nature of the husband/wife relationship and about what the passage means. Young neglects the primary exegetical consideration -- context.

The passage, he continues, has two possible meanings, which we have considered before:

(1) The desire of the woman will be subject to her husband (A.3).
(2) The wife has a yearning for her husband, as a disease (A.2).

Young prefers the first alternative.23

What Young considers an obviously impossible meaning for "desire," the meaning which "desire" has in the same syntactical setting only 15 verses away, is not impossible. The woman has the same sort of desire for her husband that sin has for Cain, a desire to possess or control him. This desire disputes the headship of the husband. As the Lord tells Cain what he should do, i.e., master or rule sin, the Lord also states what the husband

22 Young, p. 126-7.
23 Ibid., p. 127.
should do, rule over his wife. The words of the Lord in Genesis 3:16b, as in the case of the battle between sin and Cain, do not determine the victor of the conflict between husband and wife. These words mark the beginning of the battle of the sexes. As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship, and he must master her, if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination.

Experience corroborates this interpretation of God's judgment on the woman. If the words "and he shall rule over you" in Genesis 3:16b are understood in the indicative, then they are not true. As Cain did not rule over sin (Genesis 4:7b), so not every husband rules his wife, and wives have desires contrary to their husbands' and often have no desire (sexual or psychological) for their husbands.

As we have stated earlier on the basis of context, the woman's desire does not contribute to the husband's rule; the opposite is the case. The two clauses, "and your desire to control shall be to your husband" and "but he should master you," are antithetical. The presence of the personal pronoun הָא (wāḥ) in Gen. 4:7) supports this understanding of the relationship of the two clauses.

The participants of two parallel but in some ways different activities are brought into prominence by realizing them as grammatically similar items in preverbal positions. A common way of doing this is to refer to the two participants by means of explicit pronoun subjects.24 The use of the personal pronoun in preverbal position (מִיָּד) is unusual and redundant and brings the participants into contrast.25

D. Summary

Contrary to the usual interpretations of commentators, the desire of the woman in Genesis 3:16b does not make the wife (more) submissive to her husband so that he may rule over her. Her desire is to contend with him for leadership in their relationship. This desire is a result of and a just punishment for sin, but it is not God's decretive will for the woman. Consequently, the man must actively seek to rule his wife.

The reasons for preferring this interpretation are:
(1) It is consistent with the context, i.e., it is judgment for sin that the relation between man and woman is made difficult. God's words in Genesis 3:16b destroy the harmony of marriage, for the rule of the husband, part of God's original intent for marriage, is not made more tolerable by the wife's desire for her husband, but less tolerable, because she rebels against his leadership and tries to usurp it.
(2) It permits a consistent understanding of נשים in the Old Testament also consistent with its etymology.
(3) It recognizes the parallel between Genesis 3:16b and 4:7b. The interpretation of 4:7b is clearer; we know from the context that sin's desire to Cain involves mastery or enslavement and that Cain did not win the battle to rule sin.
(4) It explains the fact that husbands do not rule their wives as a result of God's proclamation in Genesis 3:16b. (Further support is implied by the New Testament commands for wives to be submissive to their husbands and the requirements for elders to rule their families.)

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BECAUSE IT HAD RAINED:
A STUDY OF GEN 2:5-7
WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR GEN 2:4-25 AND GEN 1:1-2:3

MARK D. FUTATO*

In 1958 the Westminster Theological Journal published "Because It Had Not Rained," an exegetical study of Gen 2:5 by Meredith G. Kline. The article demonstrated that according to Gen 2:5 ordinary providence was God's mode of operation during the days of creation. Since God's mode of operation was ordinary providence, and since, for example, light (Day 1) without luminaries (Day 4) is not ordinary providence, the arrangement of the six days of creation in Genesis 1 must be topical not chronological. The current article is complementary to Kline's.

Why does Gen 2:5 bother to tell us that certain kinds of vegetation were absent "for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth?" This question has intrigued and perplexed me for some time. Is the absence of rain mere geographical decoration or quasi-irrelevant data that sets the stage for the really important material that follows? Or is this information that is foundational to the narrative and its theology? The answer to this question has played a major role in my interpretation of Gen 1:1-2:25.

In this article, I intend to examine the logic, structure, and semantics of Gen 2:5-7, and to draw out several integrated conclusions: 1) It rained at the time of creation according to Gen 2:5-7. So we should discard the idea that the Bible teaches that it did not rain until the flood of Noah's day. 2) The structure of Gen 2:5-7 provides the key to understanding the structure of the whole of Gen 2:4-25, which turns out to be topical not chronological. 3) The structure and topical arrangement of Gen 2:4-25 in turn supports the argument that the arrangement of Gen 1:1-2:3 is also topical not chronological. 4) These structural considerations lead to new insights

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1 Meredith G. Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," WTJ 20 (1958) 146-57.
2 My article is also complementary to the more recent article, Meredith G. Kline, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith 48 (1996) 2-15. These two articles often arrive at the same conclusions from different lines of argumentation, and each contributes details left undiscussed or undeveloped in the other.
3 There may be some chronological sequence in these chapters, but such chronology is "accidental," i.e., the author's primary intention is to narrate the material topically.
into the polemical theology of Genesis 1-2. Genesis 1-2 serves, among other purposes, as a polemic against Canaanite Baalism. In sum, Gen 2:4-25 and Gen 1:1-2:3 are topical accounts that polemicize against Baalism, because it had rained.4

I. The Argument of Gen 2:5-7

Many of the details of Gen 2:5-7 have been studied and correctly interpreted, but in my estimation an interpretation that integrates all parts into a coherent whole has not yet been set forth. When the parts are interpreted in the immediate and broader literary contexts, as well as the geographical context of the Ancient Near East and the theological context of Canaanite religion, puzzles are solved and a coherent picture emerges. Verses 5-7 articulate a two-fold problem, reason for the problem, and solution to the problem.5 Verse 5a articulates the problem: "No siah-hassadeh had yet appeared in the land, and no 'eseb-hassadeh yet sprung up." Some commentators make

4 Some might object that there is a methodological problem from the beginning: letting a latter text (Gen 2:5-7) control the interpretation of an earlier text (Gen 1:1-2:3). I could have written this paper in the exact opposite order, examining the structure of Gen 1:1-2:3, drawing out the implications for the parallel structure in Gen 2:4-25, and then using this material to answer the question regarding "no rain" in Gen 2:5. My starting with Gen 2:5-7 reflects the point at which I entered the interpretive process some time ago. 2) All Scripture is to be used to interpret all Scripture. We often know more about the beginning of a story once we have gotten to the end. An excellent example of this is found in Numbers 19, which describes the water of purification ritual. Verses 1-6 describe the burning of the heifer; vv 7-10 describe the removal of the ashes to a purified place outside the camp; vv 11-13 describe the use of the waters of purification for those who have come in contact with a dead body. At this point the reader is bewildered as to the relationship between the ashes and the water, since the text makes no connection between the two. In vv 14-19 it becomes clear, however, that in the ritual some of the ashes are put in a jar to which water is added, then this water is sprinkled on the unclean people and/or objects to bring about the ritual cleansing. It is only in the light of the latter material (vv 14-19) that the earlier material (vv 11-13) is comprehensible. The question is not, "Ought one to begin in Genesis 1 or Genesis 2?" The question is, "What is the interpretation that does most justice to both texts?"

5 The NIV, NLT, and NAB treat vv 5-7 as part of the same literary unit, and they begin a new paragraph at v 8; so too Victor P Hamilton, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17 (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 150-60. From a text linguistics point of view the use of the waw+subject+predicate construction at the beginning of v 5 marks this material as background information; see Alviero Niccacci, The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose (JSOTSup, 86; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 35-41. There is not unanimity as to where the background information ends and the main action begins. Some scholars take the waw-relative in v 7 as the marker for the first main action; see Niccacci, Syntax, 39; Gordon Wenham, Genesis 1-15 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987); and C. John Collins, "Exegetical-theological Notes for Christian Faith in an Age of Science," unpublished (1997) 10 n50, who follows Niccacci and Wenham. But this is not necessary, since the waw-relative can be used to represent sequence within backgrounded material; see, e.g., Gen 47:13-14; Judg 11:1-3; 1 Sam 5:1. That v 7 belongs with vv 5-6 will become clear as the argument unfolds. For now, note the chiastic arrangement of the clause types that ties v6 (the reason) to v 7 (the solution): verbal (ki lo’ himtir ‘lohim + nominal (w’ adam ‘ayin) + nominal (w’ ed ya’leh) + verbal (wayyisr).
no attempt to specify the kinds of plants these two phrases have in view, but
take them as general references to vegetation. Claus Westermann, on the
other hand, has provided some specificity:

siah describes mainly but not exclusively shrubs or the wild shrubs of the steppe
(Gen 21:15; Job 30:4, 7), and 'eseb-hassadeh plants that serve for food or
domestic plants.

But even greater specificity is attainable. The phrase, siah-hassadeh, refers to
the wild vegetation that grows spontaneously after the onset of the rainy
season, and 'eseb-hassadeh refers to cultivated grains.

At the end of the dry season, and after five months of drought, the hills
of Israel are as dry as dust, and the vegetation is brown. The farmer's field
is as hard as iron, so plowing and planting are impossible. Then come the
rains, resulting in the hills of the steppe being clothed with verdure (Job 38:25-
27). The rains also soften the soil and allow the farmer to plow and plant
(see Ps 65:9-10). It is in this geographical context that we must understand
siah-hassadeh and 'eseb-hassadeh.

The word, siah, occurs only four times (Gen 2:5, 21:15; Job 30:4, 7). From
the three texts outside Gen 2:5 it is clear that siah refers to desert vegetation,
i.e., to uncultivated vegetation that grows spontaneously as a result of fall

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7 Claus Westermann, Genesis 1-11 (Augsburg: Minneapolis, 1984) 199. See also Hamilton, Genesis, 154.
8 The account in Gen 2:4-5 is being narrated from the perspective of one living in the
Syro-Palestinian Levant, as is clear from v8 where we are told that the garden was planted
"in Eden, in the east." "In the east" presumes a fixed reference point somewhere in the west.
Since the garden was located somewhere in Mesopotamia, the western reference point is the
Syro-Palestinian Levant in general and the land of Canaan in particular, the land in which
the audience for whom the story was originally written was about to live. In a complementary
fashion, Theodore Hiebert, The Yahwist's Landscape: Nature and Religion in Early Israel (New
York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 36, makes the following point: "One key detail
is the reference, in the epic's opening sentence, to rainfall as essential for the growth of
vegetation.... Yet when the beginning of the Yahwist's epic is compared to the beginnings
of origin narratives from other cultures, this mention of rain stands out as a distinctive charac-
teristic of J's narrative. In the great river valley civilizations of the ancient Near East, Egypt
and Mesopotamia, where agriculture was dependent on the inundation of lowlands by flooding
rivers and on irrigation systems related to them, narratives focus on these phenomena rather
than on the rainfall that is the ultimate source of the rising rivers. A creation text from Ur,
in just such a series of introductory clauses describing not yet existent realities as those that
begin the Yahwist's epic, focuses on the key phenomena of irrigation agriculture:

In those days no canals were opened,

No dredging was done at dikes and ditches on dike tops.
The seeder plough and ploughing had not yet been instituted
for the knocked under and downed people.
No (one of) all the countries was planting in furrows.

By contrast, J's reference to rain alone reflects the rain-based, dryland farming character-
istic of the highlands on the shores of the Mediterranean where biblical Israel came into
being." Hiebert's point is well taken, apart from his views on Pentateuchal sources.
In Gen 21:15, for example, Hagar placed her young son under "one of the bushes (siah)" in the desert of Beersheba. The two occurrences in Job 30:4 and 7 are similar,

3 Haggard from want and hunger,  
they roamed the parched land  
in desolate wastelands at night.

4 In the brush (siah) they gathered salt herbs,  
and their food was the root of the broom tree.

5 They were banished from their fellow men,  
shouted at as if they were thieves.

6 They were forced to live in the dry stream beds,  
among the rocks and in holes in the ground.

7 They brayed among the bushes (siah)  
and huddled in the undergrowth.

The "parched land" and "desolate wastelands" of v 3 make clear that siah refers to uncultivated vegetation of the desert or steppe.

So Westermann was being too cautious when he said "siah describes mainly but not exclusively shrubs or the wild shrubs of the steppe." There is no evidence to suggest that siah refers to anything other than "wild shrubs of the steppe."9

On the other hand, ‘eseb-hassddeh occurs in texts like Exod 9:22, 25 which have cultivated grain in view,

22 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt--on men and animals and on everything growing in the fields (‘eseb-hassadeh) of Egypt. . . ." 25 Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields both men and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields (‘eseb-hassadeh) and stripped every tree.

Verses 31-32 provide specificity for the more general ‘eseb-hassddeh,

31 The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. 32 The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.

Here ‘eseb-hassddeh clearly refers to cultivated grains like flax, barley, wheat, and spelt. Similarly, and closer in context to Gen 2:5, cultivated grains (‘eseb-hassadeh) are in view in Gen 3:18 where the farmer will eat the grain that is the result of his arduous labor.10

9 Hiebert, Landscape, 37, is thus correct when he says that siah-hassadeh "is used for vegetation that grows in semiarid and arid regions, the low bushes and dwarf shrubs characteristic of areas that lack enough rain to support intensive agriculture." But his explicit connection with pasturage of sheep and goats has no support in the context.

10 See Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 169. The New Living Translation translates ‘eseb-hassadeh in Gen 2:5 as "grain," as does Hiebert, Landscape, 37; but contra Hiebert, the contrast between siah-hassadeh and ‘eseb-hassadeh is not
This proposed contrast in Gen 2:5 between wild vegetation and cultivated grain finds immediate confirmation in v 5b.

Verse 5b articulates the two-fold reason for the problem with impeccable logic: "because the Lord God had not sent rain on the land, and there was no man to cultivate the ground." There was no vegetation that springs up spontaneously as a result of the rains, because there was no rain. And there was no cultivated grain, because there was no cultivator. So that the reader will not miss the two-fold reason corresponding to the two-fold problem, the Hebrew text focuses the reader's attention on the two-fold reason, the absence of rain and the absence of anyone to cultivate the fields, by placing himtir ("sent rain") and 'adam ("man") in the clause-initial position in their respective clauses. A coherent picture is emerging: there was no wild vegetation because there was no rain, and there was no cultivated grain because there was no cultivator.

By this point the author has created an expectation in the mind of the reader: the two-fold problem with its two-fold reason will be given a two-fold solution. Yet, here is where virtually all interpretations fail for lack of coherence.

Verses 6-7 provide the two-fold solution: "So [God] caused rain clouds to rise up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground, and the Lord God formed the man..." Verse 7 says, "the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." Here lies the solution to the second prong of the two-fold problem and reason. The logic is cogent and the picture is coherent: "no cultivated grain had sprung up... for there was no one to cultivate the land... and the LORD God formed the man." This is all rather straightforward and uncontested.

The crux is the meaning of the word 'ed in v 6. Scholars have proposed numerous meanings for 'ed, but "stream" seems to have won the day. "Stream" can not possibly be correct for two reasons: 1) The text does not say that the problem was a lack of water in general, a problem which could be solved by water from any one of a variety of sources, for instance, a stream. The problem was a lack of rain in particular, because in the ancient Syro-Palestine Levant rain was the sine qua non of vegetation, especially wild vegetation. 2) "Stream" makes nonsense out of such a well-constructed and tightly argued text. If "stream" is understood, the sense is something like "no wild vegetation had appeared in the land... for the LORD God had not sent rain... but a stream was arising to water the whole surface of the land." If a stream was present to water the whole surface of the land, then

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11 See Westermann, Genesis, 200-201, for an overview.
there was ample water for the appearance of wild vegetation, and the reason clause ("for the Lord God had not sent rain") is completely irrelevant and illogical.13

Though Gen 2:5-7 primarily connects rain with wild vegetation, in reality rain is also the prerequisite for cultivated grain in the life of the ancient Hebrew farmer (see Deut 11:8-17). Since rain is the prerequisite for ‘eseb-hassadeh as well as for siah-hassadeh, and since Adam will eventually ‘eseb-hassadeh according to Gen 3:18, Adam must have experienced rain. Once again, if "for the LORD God had not sent rain" is to make any logical sense, rain must have fallen in Adam's experience.14

So v 6 is begging to be interpreted as a reference to rain. The expectation is for something like, "no wild vegetation had appeared in the land ... for the LORD God had not sent rain ... so God sent rain." On this point Mitchell Dahood was right. Stimulated by the association of the obscure Eblaite NI.DU with rain (ga-sum; Hebrew gesem) and the association of Hebrew ‘ed with rain (mtr), Dahood proposed reading NI.DU as Semitic i-du and understanding both the Eblaite i-du and the Hebrew ‘ed as "rain cloud."15 Whether or not Dahood is correct in his interpretation of the Eblaite evidence,16 he is correct in taking Hebrew ‘ed as "rain cloud," as can be demonstrated from the literary and climatic contexts in which ‘ed occurs in the MT itself.17

The only other recognized occurrence of Hebrew ‘ed is Job 36:27,18 which the NIV translates,
He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams (‘ed).

The *NIV* translates 'ed here with "streams" in keeping with its rendering in Gen 2:6. A footnote, however, offers an alternative: "distill from the mist (‘ed) as rain." The alternative in the footnote is certainly closer to the true sense. It correctly recognizes the sense "from" for the preposition ℓ, but "mist" ("water in the form of particles floating or falling in the atmosphere at or near the surface of the earth and approaching the form of rain") cannot be the sense of ‘ed here, since mist does not "distill as rain (matar)," especially as "abundant rain" (see v 28). The ancients knew as well as we that rain distills/drops from clouds, as Eccl 1:3 makes clear,

If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth.

Dahood, translates Job 36:27,

When he draws up drops from the sea, they distill as rain (matar) from his rain cloud (‘ed).

Such a rendering not only makes sense in the narrow confines of the verse and Syro-Palestinian meteorology, but note how well it fits the context,

27 When he draws up drops from the sea, they distill as rain from his rain cloud. (Dahood)

28 The clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind. (*NIV*)

Note how a hinge is formed by v 27b ("rain cloud") and v 28a ("clouds"). This hinge connects the beginning of the cycle (evaporation in v 27a) with the end of the cycle (abundant rain on the land in v 28b). Clearly, the text does not picture mist distilling as rain or drops of water distilling to streams, but abundant rain falling from rain clouds.

Given that ‘ed has the sense "rain cloud" in Job 36:27, where it is collocated with rain (mtr), it is certainly plausible that ed has the same sense in Gen 2:6, where it is likewise collocated with rain (mtr; Gen 2:5). The plausibility of this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that Dahood was not the first to understand ‘ed in the sense of "rain cloud;" the ancient Targums consistently render 'id with Aramaic ’nn ("cloud").

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20 Dahood, "Rain Cloud," 536.
An immediate objection arises, however, if we translate Gen 2:6, "A rain cloud came up (qal of ‘lh) from the land," since rain clouds do not literally come up from the land. So, for example, David Tsumura has said,

On the other hand, ed is described as "coming up" (ya’aleh) from the earth (’eres), either from the surface of the earth or from underground. Thus, ‘ed, the water from below, is clearly distinguished from rain water, the water from above, in Gen 2:5-6.

But consider a text like Ps 135:7,

He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth (’eres);
he sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

The verb translated "makes rise" in v 7a is the hiphil of ‘lh, and the word for rain in v 7b is matar. Ps 135:7 thus provides a close parallel for Gen 2:5-6, showing that clouds do rise from the land, at least in terms of how things appear to an observer standing on the land. Clouds appear on the horizon, whether the horizon is a plain or a mountain, and thus give the appearance of rising from the land. The seventh time Elijah's servant looked out over the Mediterranean he said a "cloud as small as a man's hand is rising (‘lh)
from the sea" (1 Kgs 18:44), not literally rising from the sea, of course, but rising in terms of appearance, since the cloud was rising in relation to the sea that formed the western horizon. Compare also Jer 10:13 || 51:16,

When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar;
he makes clouds rise (hiphil of ‘lh) from the ends of the earth (’eres).
He sends lightning with the rain (matar)
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

In light of these texts, I am also inclined to agree with Dahood when he takes ya’aleh in Gen 2:6 (used in the context of matar and ’eres) as a hiphil with God as the subject for the following reasons: 1) Ps 135:7 and Jer 10:13 use the hiphil of ‘lh + "clouds" as the direct object with God as subject in the context of matar and ’eres, and thus the legitimacy of collocating the hiphil of dh + "clouds" is established, 2) God is the subject of the preceding himtir (Gen 2:5) and the following wayyiser ("formed;" v 7), so continuity of the subject would result, and most significantly 3) God would be the

Pseudo Jonathan says, "But a cloud of glory came down from beneath the throne of glory, and was filled with water from the ocean, went up again from the earth, and sent rain down and watered the whole surface of the ground;" periphrastic elements are italicized in Michael Maher, trans. Targum Pseudo Jonathan: Genesis (The Aramaic Bible 1A; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 1A.22.

22 Tsumura, Earth, 93.
23 Dahood, "Rain Cloud," 536.
24 While continuity of the subject is not required (see 2:21 and Collins, "Exegetical-theological Notes," 13 n79), such continuity is a consideration along with the other two factors.
explicit *solver* of both the problem of no rain and the problem of no cultivator--God caused the rain clouds to rise and God formed the cultivator.

A second objection to taking *‘ed* as a reference to rain (cloud) would be that Gen 2:10 says a "river" watered the garden, not rain. In fact, the repetition of the hiphil of *sqh* in v 6 and v 10 is part of an argument for taking *‘ed* as a reference to the river of v 10.25 The repetition, however, can be explained as a means of connecting the source ("rain clouds;" v 6) with the result ("river;" v 10). But even if *‘ed* is defined by the "river," the presence of rain simply becomes an unargued presupposition of the text. This is so because the ancients were as well aware as we are that precipitation is the source of river water (see, for example, Matt 7:25, 27). Moreover, the word for "river" in our text, *nahar*, is typically used for perennial rivers like the Euphrates. Since such rivers are fed by rain (and melting snow in the surrounding mountains), the presence of a *nhr* would be proof of the presence of rain rather than an objection to it. The burden of proof rests squarely on the one who would wish to argue that something other than a precipitation-fed river is in view in the use of the word *nahar* in Gen 2:10, since the word is never used for anything other than a precipitation-fed river in the Hebrew Bible. But ultimately the resultant illogical text (as discussed above) when *‘ed* is taken as "stream" outweighs all other considerations and precludes understanding *‘ed* as a reference to a river or stream.

Meredith Kline has adopted Dahood’s interpretation of *‘ed* as "rain cloud" and has further suggested taking the imperfect of *‘1h* in an inceptive sense,26 "he began to make rain clouds27 arise." Grammatically the inceptive sense is possible,28 and contextually the inceptive sense is required, for if there had been rain clouds previously, there would have been rain and the reason clause ("for the LORD God had not sent rain") would be irrelevant and illogical.

As with the second prong of the two-fold problem and reason, so also with the first prong, a coherent picture emerges: "no wild vegetation had appeared in the land ... for the Lord God had not sent rain ... so29 he began to make rain clouds arise from the land and water the whole surface of the ground."

26 Kline, "Space," 12.
27 I am taking the singular as a collective.
29 For the use of waw + non-predicate + predicate in a consecutive clause, see GKC §166a; while most of the examples are of volitives, Prov 30:3b is not, *w’da’at q’dosim ‘eda* ("so I do [not] know the Holy One"), waw+direct object+imperfect. The consecutive nature of the clause is not essential to the argument; the clause could (with less likelihood) be adversative; for an adversative clause introduced with waw following a negative clause, see GKC § 163a and Paul Jouon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 14; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991), §172a.
1. Summary
Gen 2:5-7 is quite logical, highly structured, and perfectly coherent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No wild vegetation</td>
<td>--&gt; 1) No rain   --&gt;   1) God sent rain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No cultivated grain</td>
<td>--&gt; 2) No cultivator --&gt; 2) God formed a cultivator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Implications for the Reading of Gen 2:4-25

The narrative of Gen 2:4-25 flows at a steady pace, moved along by a sequence of waw-relative verbs. The "most obvious and frequent" use of the waw-relative is "that of simple chronological succession." That is, when a wayyiqtol verb is used, the story usually takes an incremental step forward along a timeline. So, the prima facie reading of Gen 2:4-5 is chronological. A clear exception to the apparently chronological sequencing of material is the information provided in vv 10-14, pertaining to the river; this section is marked as non-sequential and circumstantial in the normal manner: by the use of the waw + subject + predicate construction (ουανάρ γεωσή). External considerations (comparing Gen 2:4-25 with Gen 1:1-2:3) and internal considerations (the flow of the narrative in Gen 2:4-25), however, disallow a strictly chronological reading of Gen 2:4-25.

An external example of dischronology is found in Gen 2:19a, "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them." The Hebrew verbs translated "formed" and "brought" are waw-relatives, resulting in the prima facie sequence of God's forming (wayyiser) of Adam (v 7a), followed by God's forming (wayyiser) of the animals (v 19a). A straightforward reading of Gen 2:19, in other words, puts Gen 2:4-25 in conflict with a chronological reading of Gen 1:1-2:3, where the animals were formed before the man (Gen 1:24-27). One may resort to the use of the waw-relative for a past perfect in this case to harmonize the two texts, but a

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33 NASB. The same sense is found in the *KJV, NKJV, 1901 ASV, RSV*, and *NRSV*
34 See Collins, "Wayyiqtol," 135-40, for a discussion of the issue in general and his application to Gen 2:19 in particular. The waw-relative can be used for the pluperfect in a limited set of environments: when there is lexical repetition or when knowledge of the real world leads to the conclusion that an explanation of a previous event or situation is being provided; see Buth, "Collision," 147. Buth, "Collision," 148-49, argues that Gen 2:19 does not meet the
waw-relative is not the *obvious syntactic* choice for dischronologized material, as Gen 2:10 has already shown. The point is that while the *prima facie* reading is chronological, a closer reading (aided by an external comparison with Gen 1:1-2:3) leads us to the conclusion that the *prima facie*, chronological reading is not correct. The author is guided at this point by concerns that are not chronological.  

For, in keeping with the style of the text, had Moses been concerned about strict chronology and the chronological harmony of Gen 1:1-2:3 with Gen 2:4-5, he could have syntactically signaled the dischronology of Gen 2:19 with the waw + subject + predicate construction, as in Gen 2:10, or with a relative clause containing a perfect verb for the past perfect, as in Gen 2:8 ("ser yasar, "whom he had formed").

A key internal consideration confirms that strict chronology is not the organizational control for Gen 2:4-25. Having formed Adam (v 7a), God proceeded to place Adam in the Garden (v 8b),

7Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. 8And the Lord God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.

But then in v 15 we read,

Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

Again, the verb translated "took" in v 15 is a waw-relative, that, if taken to indicate chronological sequence, would result in Adam being placed in the garden in v 8 and then being placed in the garden a second time in v 15. I suppose one could argue that Adam was put in the garden in v 8, was removed from the garden or that he left the garden without our being told, and was subsequently put back in the garden in v 15, but such straining to maintain a chronological reading of the text is unwarranted, especially criteria for temporal overlay. See also Waltke and O’Connor, *Syntax*, §33.2.3 for a general discussion.

35 Using the waw-relative for the pluperfect instead of the usual constructions (waw + subject + predicate or the perfect in a relative clause) serves to elevate the material to a main-line situation in the narrative, rather than demoting the material to a subordinate level; see Buth, "Collision," 148. An author may use the unexpected waw-relative form for a variety of reasons. Collins, "Wayyiqtol," 139, argues that the communicative effect in Gen 2:19 is to emphasize the anthropocentric nature of the story. A better explanation seems to be that introducing the forming of the animals at this point creates dramatic tension by raising the question, "Will a suitable helper for the man be found among the animals?" The answer is, "But for the man, no suitable helper was found!" (v20b). Then, after this dramatic delay, the suitable is helper is made, and the man exclaims, "zo’it (This one [as opposed to the previous animals])! happa am (This time [as opposed to the previous parade])!" (v23).

36 NASB. The same sense is found in the *KJV*, *NKJV*, 1901 *ASV*, *RSV*, and *NRSV*.

37 NASB. The same sense is found in the *KJV*, *NKJV*, 1901 *ASV*, *RSV*, and *NRSV*. 
since there is an easier solution, one that is explicable within the conventions of Hebrew style.

Gen 2:4-25 provides an example of the Hebrew stylistic technique of synoptic/resumption-expansion. A Hebrew author will at times tell the whole story in brief form (synopsis), then repeat the story (resumption), adding greater detail (expansion). Such is the case in Gen 2:4-25.

Gen 1:1-2:3 is the prologue to the entire Book of Genesis, and Gen 2:4 is the heading to Gen 2:4-4:26, the first of ten "toledot" sections that provide the structure for the Book of Genesis as a whole. Gen 2:5-7 provides the setting for Gen 2:8-25 in particular. Gen 2:8 is a synopsis of the whole that is resumed and expanded in Gen 2:9-25.

The synopsis has a two-fold nature, in keeping with the two-fold nature of the introductory vv5-7. First, God planted a garden (v 8a), then he placed in the garden the man whom he had formed (v 8b). This synopsis with its focus on vegetation and the man in the garden is clearly integrated with--and flows from--the preceding concern with the lack of vegetation and the lack of a man to cultivate the ground. In other words, the coherent picture that emerged in vv 5-7 continues to manifest itself in the synopsis of v8.

Gen 2:4-25 is not a second account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, but is rather an account that focuses on the planting of a garden and human life in that garden (vv 9-25), as the introduction anticipates and the synopsis articulates.

Verses 9-14 resume and expand v 8a, the planting of the garden. Verses 15-25 resume and expand v 8b, the putting of the man in the garden.

Verses 9-14 resume and expand v 8a. In v 9a the planting (nt’) of the garden is detailed in terms of God causing to sprout (smh) from the ground "every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food." Pleasing to whose sight and good for whose food? The man's sight and his food, obviously. In addition, God caused the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to sprout (v 9b); both of these trees find their meaning in relation to the man as well. Not only does v 9 pick up the first half of the two-fold synopsis in v 8a, but it also picks up the first half of the two-fold problem in v 5a: there was no vegetation. Verses 10-14 go on to describe the river that waters the garden and that then divides and flows through such places as Havilah, Cush, and Ashur: places where people live. The gold and precious stones are of value to the people who would live in these places and

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41 I understand Gen 2:5 as having a global reference that would parallel the situation prior to Days 3b and 6b, i.e., before God created vegetation (Day 3b) and people (Day 6b); see below.
BECAUSE IT HAD RAINED

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to those with whom they would trade. Gen 2:9-14 describes a garden of vegetation clearly designed for human habitation.

Verses 15-25 resume and expand v 8b. Verse 15 repeats v 8b with different vocabulary and adds the explicit purpose for placing the man in the garden: "to cultivate ('bd) it." Not only does v 15 pick up the second half of the two-fold synopsis in v 8b, but it also picks up the second half of the two-fold reason in v 5b: "there was no man to cultivate ('bd) the ground." Verses 16-17 explicitly connect the man and the vegetation, as the two were implicitly connected in v 9. The remainder of the text (vv 18-25) provides the details of how God created a suitable helper for the man in the garden. By the end of Genesis 2 the man and the woman are living blissfully in the garden.

1. Summary

Gen 2:4-25 is a highly structured topical account with a two-fold focus on vegetation and humanity. The two-fold problem of no wild vegetation and no cultivated vegetation (v 5), owing to the two-fold reason of no rain and no cultivator (v 6), provisionally solved in a two-fold way by the sending of rain clouds and the forming of a man (v 7), is roundly resolved in the two-fold synopsis of God planting a garden and putting the man in the garden to cultivate it (v 8), and the two-fold expansion with the same focus on vegetation and humanity (vv 9-25).

III. Implications for the Reading of Gen 1:1-2:3

Gen 1:1-2 and 2:1-3 form a frame around the creation account. The initial sentences of the opening and closing sections with their repetition of "the heavens and the earth" form an inclusio.

Genesis 1 begins with the grand affirmation that in the beginning God created everything. Like Gen 2:5-7, Gen 1:2 provides the setting for the following material. Parallel to Gen 2:5 with its two-fold problem, Gen 1:2 presents a two-fold problem: 1) the earth was "unproductive and uninhabited" and 2) "darkness was over the surface of the deep." Both of

42 Bruce K. Waltke, "The First Seven Days: What Is the Creation Account Trying to Tell Us?", CT (August 12, 1988) 43 and Cassuto, Genesis, 22, argue against over interpreting this phrase as having two distinct referents. But Tsumura, Earth, 17-43, has made a compelling case for understanding the phrase to refer to the earth as unproductive and uninhabited; note that at the end of Day 3 the earth is productive ("The earth produced vegetation;" 1:12), and at the end of Day 6 the earth is inhabited ("And God said, `Let the earth produce living creatures;'" 1:24), and thus the problem of the earth being "unproductive and uninhabited" has been resolved in a symmetrical way. The topic of another paper would be to trace this protology of "unproductive and uninhabited" through the typology of Israel as the new people in the new fertile land to the eschatology of the new creation inhabited by a people no one can number.
these problems are resolved in the following material, just as the two-fold problem of Gen 2:5 was resolved in the text that follows it.

Gen 2:1 signals the end of the account by means of the repetition of "the heavens and the earth." Gen 2:2-3 then brings us to the telos of the text, God's Sabbath rest.

Gen 1:3-31 tell the story of God's eight creative acts in six days. Day 1 recounts the first creative act ("And God said, 'Let there be light'"); Day 2 recounts the second ("And God said, ‘Let there be an expanse’"); then Day 3 recounts the third and fourth ("And God said, ‘Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place and let dry ground appear" plus "And God said, ‘Let the land produce vegetation’"). Like Day 1, Day 4 recounts a single creative act, the fifth ("And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky’"); like Day 2, Day 5 recounts one, the sixth ("And God said, ‘Let the water teem with living creatures and let the birds fly above the earth’"); like Day 3, Day 6 recounts two, the seventh and the eight ("And God said, ‘Let the land produce living creatures’" plus "And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image’"). This arrangement of 1 + 1 + 2 followed by 1 + 1 + 2 makes the parallel nature of Days 1 through 3 and Days 4 through 6 obvious.

The parallels go beyond that of the number of creative events and days, however. There are other obvious parallels between Days 1 through 3 and Days 4 through 6. The creating of light on Day 1 parallels the creating of the luminaries on Day 4. The creating of the waters below and the sky above on Day 2 parallels the creating of the fish and the birds on Day 5. The creating of dry land on Day 3a parallels the creating of land animals on Day 6a, and the creating of vegetation on Day 3b parallels the creating of mankind on Day 6b.

It may seem that the parallelism breaks down at the end, because vegetation and mankind may not seem like much of a parallel. But when one recalls the two-fold focus on vegetation and humanity in Gen 2:4-25, the parallelism becomes evident. The parallelism between vegetation and people is not only evident in the text but is highly significant for the theology of the text (see below).

The first three days find their telos in the creation of vegetation on Day 3b, and the second three days find their telos in the creation of humanity on Day 6b. Thus Gen 1:1-2:3 has the same two-fold focus as Gen 2:4-25, a focus on vegetation and humanity. Rather than being two disparate accounts from two disparate sources, Gen 1:1-2:3 and Gen 2:4-25 form a highly integrated literary unit. Rather than being a second creation account, Gen 2:4-25 is properly read as a resumption and expansion not of Day 6 but of Days 3b and 6b taken together as a unit.

43 For a schematic presentation of this well known point see Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: the Opening Chapters of Genesis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984), 54-55.
Day 3b speaks of the creation of vegetation (dese’) in two broad kinds: "seed-bearing plants" (‘eseb mazria’ zera’) and "trees that bear fruit" (‘es p’ri oseh p’ri). Day 6b specifies that people are permitted to eat from both kinds of vegetation: "seed-bearing plants" (‘eseb zorea’ zera’) and "every tree that has fruit with seed in it" (kol-ha’asaser-bo p’ri-ha’es). So Days 3b and 6b are bound together by linguistic repetition as well as by thematic conception. So too, the people of Day 6b are bound to the vegetation of Day 3b through the motif of food.

Gen 1:3-31 is topically arranged. Granted 1) the common focus in Genesis 1 and 2 on vegetation and humanity, 2) the general parallels between Days 1 through 3, 3) the specific parallels between Days 3b and Day 6b, 4) the fact that Gen 2:4-25 resumes and expands Days 3b and 6b taken together, and 5) the topical nature of Gen 2:4-25, we should not be surprised by the suggestion that the coherent reading of Gen 1:1-2:3 (that is, the reading that coheres internally as well as externally with Gen 2:4-25) is topical rather than chronological. Such a reading is confirmed by some further details from Days 1 and 4, as well as by the theology of Gen 1:1-2:25.

The parallelism between Days 1 and 4 goes beyond the general correspondence between the creation of light on Day 1 and the creation of the luminaries on Day 4. What did God accomplish on Day 1 by means of the creation of light? "God divided the light from the darkness" (wayyabdel ‘elohim ben ha’or uben ha‘osek), and the result was "day" (yom) and "night" (layla). So by the end of Day 1, God had successfully divided the light from the darkness and established the sequence of day and night. Now, what was God's purpose in creating the luminaries on Day 4? We are given a variety of purposes, e.g., they will serve as signs and will rule the day and the night. But what is the overarching purpose? The overarching purpose is indicated by the repetition of "to divide" (lehabdil) in v 14 and v 18, a repetition that forms an inclusio around Day 4. In v 14 we are told that God created the luminaries "to divide the day from the night" (lehabdil ben hayyom uben hallayld). But God had already divided the day from the night on Day 1! In v 18 we are told that God created the luminaries "to divide the light from...
the darkness" (יהבּיל ben ha' or uben hahosek). But God had already divided the light from the darkness on Day 1! These linguistic parallels between Day 1 and Day 4 must not be overlooked. Either God's work on Day 4 is redundant, reaccomplishing the same thing he had already accomplished on Day 1, or the accounts of God's work on Days 1 and 4 are two different perspectives on the same creative work.

The forming and stationing of the sun, moon, and stars are attributed to day four. Their functions with respect to the earth are also stated here, first in the fiat section (Gen 1:14,15) and again (in reverse order) in the fulfillment section (Gen 1:16-18). They are to give light on the earth and to rule by bounding light/day and darkness/night, as well as by demarcating the passage of years and succession of seasons. These effects which are said to result from the production and positioning of the luminaries on day four are the same effects that are already attributed to the creative activity of day one (Gen 1:3-5). There too daylight is produced on the earth and the cycle of light/day and darkness/night is established.46

The repetition of language binds the work of the Days 1 and 4 together into a single activity.

In terms of chronology, day four thus brings us back to where we were in day one, and in fact takes us behind the effects described there to the astral apparatus that accounts for them. The literary sequence is then not the same as the temporal sequence.47

But the account of Day 4 adds information to that given on Day 1: the luminaries are the sources of the light created on Day 1, and there are subordinate purposes for the creation of the luminaries as well. In other words, Days 1 and 4 are another application of the synopsis-resumption/expansion technique employed on a variety of levels in Genesis 1 and 2. There is a consistent style of narration employed in both texts: just as Gen 2:15 is not chronologically sequential to Gen 2:8b, but is a repetition with additional information regarding the placing of the man in the garden, so Day 4 is not chronologically sequential to Day 1, but is a repetition with additional information regarding the creation of light.48

47 Kline, "Space," 8.
48 A rarely discussed but important text that bears on the question of a chronological reading of Gen 1 is Job 38:4-7,

4Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.
5Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone-
7while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

This text assumes the creation of the stars before the founding of the earth and before the separation of the seas and dry land; see Ps 104:5-9 for this same architectural picture of the
One might object that had Moses wished to represent Gen 1:14-31 as an overlay of Gen 1:3-13 he would have begun v 14 with the expected we‘elohim ‘amar (waw + subject + predicate), and that the use of the waw-relative indicates that the events of Day 4 are temporally sequential to those of Days 1 through 3. But as we have already noted, the waw-relative (here wayyo'omer) can be used for temporal overlay when either lexical repetition or knowledge of the real world signals such an overlay. Here both criteria are met: lexical repetitions abound between Day 1 and Day 4, and light without luminaries is not part of the real world in which the original audience lived.

1. Summary

Gen 1:3-31 is a coherent account of creation that has been arranged topically to focus the reader's attention on vegetation and humanity. This focus sets the stage for the sequel, Gen 2:4-25, which resumes and expands upon this two-fold focus in a variety of ways, one in particular being the role that rain plays in the production of the vegetation that people eat. These literary conclusions have significant implications for understanding one key aspect of the theology of the text.

IV. Implications for the Theology of Genesis 1-2

The literary structure of Genesis 1 and 2 is significant for the theology of the text in a variety of ways. The primary reason for lifting the event of Day 4 to the main event-line (rather than marking it grammatically as a temporal overlay) and shaping the account after the pattern of a week is clearly the sabbatical theology of the text. The theology of the Sabbath is certainly central to the theology of Gen 1:1-2:3. In his self-published work, "Kingdom Prologue," Meredith G. Kline spells out the sabbatical theology of Gen 1:1-2:3 and its relation to the parallel arrangements of Days 1 through 3 and Days 4 through 6. He also articulates the sabbatical theology of Gen 1:1–2:3 in his recent article. Here I

50 The objection that supernatural light (e.g., the light of God's glory as in Rev 21:5) is in view in Days 1 through 3 has been adequately countered by Kline's argument that such an interpretation "distorts the eschatological design of creation history, according to which the advent of God's Glory as the source of illumination that does away with need for the sun awaits the Consummation" ("Space," 9); see footnote 30 where Kline points out that in the consummation there will be light from the Glory and not from the sun, but that this is also joined with the absence of night, a situation that clearly does not pertain to Days 1 through 3, thus undermining the attempt to use Rev 22:5 to explain the light without luminaries of Days 1 through 3.


want on focus on a different but vitally important aspect of the text’s theology by answering the question, “Why the concern with rain and the resultant vegetation that people eat?”

Who is the presumed original reader of Genesis 1–2? Assuming a late date of composition, many read Genesis 1 against the backdrop of Mesopotamian religion with a presumed post-exilic reader in view. Genesis 1 is consequently read as a theological polemic against Mesopotamian religion. What difference for the theology of the text would it make, if we presume the original reader to be a pre-exilic Israelite and the polemic to be against Canaanite religion?

The dominant religious threat for pre-exilic Israel was Baalism. “The agrarian peoples of the ancient Middle East were acutely aware of the most basic equation: water = life.” So water played a major role in the theologies of ancient Near Eastern peoples. Canaan, however, was not like Egypt or Mesopotamia, where agriculture was based on irrigation from rivers. Canaan was a land where agriculture was dependent on rain.

The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven (Deut 11:10–11).

Canaanite religion was consequently not concerned with river gods, as were the religions of Mesopotamia and Egypt. The primary god of the Canaanites was Baal, “the rider on

53 I am not the first to suggest a Canaanite background for Genesis 1–2. In God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), John Day read Genesis 1 as a demythologized Canaanite Chaoskampf: “In so far as tehom’s mythological background is concerned this is not Babylonian at all, but rather Canaanite…” (50) and “The wind of Gen 1:2 derives ultimately from the wind of Baal employed against the sea monster” (53). In “The Canaanite Background of Gen I-III,” VT 10 (1960), F. F. Hvidberg said, “At the back of the narrative is the prophet’s struggle against baal. It is against him the story fights” (286) and “My aim has been to call attention to what they [Gen 1 and 2] have in common: a glimpse of the life-and-death struggle with Baal of the Canaanites for the soul of Israel” (294). In “Interpreting the Creation and Fall Story in Gen 2–3,” ZAW 93 (1981), N. Wyatt said, “We may then accept F. F. Hvidberg’s general theory that the story is intended as a polemic against Canaanite religion, with the proviso that it is the cult of El and Asherah and not that of baal which is attacked” (19).


55 Fred E. Woods, Water and Storm Polemics Against Baalism in the Deuteronomistic History (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

56 Yehuda Karmon, Israel: A Regional Geography (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1971), 27, says of Israel, “Rainfall is the decisive climatic factor in the physical existence of population and for plant life and agriculture.”

57 Woods, Water, 1, suggests that the unpredictable nature of the Tigris and Euphrates over against the predictability of the Nile helps to explain some of the fundamental differences between Mesopotamian and Egyptian religion.
the clouds,” the storm god whose rain was considered absolutely necessary for the growth of crops and hence for life itself.

When the Hebrew tribes left the stable environment of Egypt and headed toward the land of Canaan, they encountered a people who worshipped the storm god called Baal and his retinue. Such an encounter created a culture conflict. Israel had been led by Yahweh through the sea and the desert, but as she entered the new land, Israel asked, “Was Yahweh also the god of Canaan?” As the Israelites settled in Canaan, they were tempted to ask their Canaanite neighbors, “How does your garden grow?” Such inquiry was seen by later writers as having led to eventual apostasy and exile as Israel became idolatrous and eventually drowned in Baalism.

This struggle against Baalism is part of the fabric of Genesis through Kings. The contest on Mt. Carmel brought this struggle into sharp relief. The alternatives were clear: “If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him” (1 Kgs 18:21). The means of determination was clear: “The god who answers by fire—he is God” (1 Kgs 18:24). When Baal failed to answer by fire and the Lord sent fire from heaven, the conclusion was clear: “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!” (1 Kgs 18:39).

But this contest was not about which deity controlled fire. The issue at hand was, “Who controls the rain?” The struggle began with Elijah’s words,

As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word (1 Kgs 17:1).

And the struggle ended when the Lord God of Israel sent rain,

The sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain came on. . . .

(1 Kgs 18:45).

The polemic against Baalism is at the heart of OT covenant theology. Having quoted Deut 11:10–11 above, let me now quote those verses again in the context of a few of the verses that follow:

The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you planted your seed and irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden. But the land you are crossing the Jordan to take possession of is a land of mountains and valleys that drinks rain from heaven. It is a land the

58 Day, “Baal,” 1.545, says that Baal “is clearly the most active and prominent of all the Canaanite deities . . . the great storm god: the fertility of the land depends on the rain this god supplies. . . .”


60 Of his own book Woods, Water, 17, says, “this study will demonstrate that the Deuteronomic History supplied the Israelites with polemical literary material, especially dealing with water and storm, in order to fight Baalism rather than to conform to it.”
LORD your God cares for; the eyes of the LORD your God are continually on it from the beginning of the year to its end. So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them. Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, and he will shut the heavens so that it will not rain and the ground will yield no produce, and you will soon perish from the good land the LORD is giving you (Deut 11:10-17; emphasis added).

The land of Canaan was not a land that just "naturally" drank in rain from the sky. It was a land that drank in rain from heaven because YHWH Israel's God, cared for the land. Covenant loyalty to YHWH would result in rain, vegetation, and life. Worshiping other gods would result in no rain, no produce, and death. Now, what god in particular would Israel have been tempted to turn to with a view to procuring rain and the resultant vegetation? Baal, of course.

Reading the OT, it becomes clear that it was the Baal cult that provided the greatest and most enduring threat to the development of exclusive Yahweh worship within ancient Israel. The fact that the Israelites were settled among the Canaanites, for whom the worship of Baal was so important, and that Palestine is a land utterly dependent for its fertility upon the rain, accounts for the tempting nature of this cult as well as the strength of the OT polemic against it. The ubiquitous threat of Baalism provides the theological context in which Genesis 1-2 is to be read.

Genesis 1-2 proclaims that YHWH, the God of Israel, is the Lord of the rain, the resultant vegetation, and life. This central aspect of the message of Genesis 1-2 is embedded in the structure of the accounts. Why the two-fold focus on vegetation and the people that live on that vegetation? Why even bring into consideration the lack of vegetation owing to a lack of rain? Is this simply geographical decoration?

No, for the Book of Genesis serves as the prologue to the history of Israel. Genesis makes the point that the God of the nation of Israel is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Genesis 12-50), and that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the Creator of the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1-11). The God of Israel is the Creator. From the beginning the God of Israel, not Baal, has been the provider of the rain that is the prerequisite of life. YHWH God of Israel has been the Lord of the rain from the beginning! Redemptive theology, as exemplified in texts like Deut 11:10-17 and 1 Kings 17-18, is rooted in the creation theology of Genesis 1-2. Redemption is rooted in creation. YHWH God of Israel claims to be the true and living

66 Youngblood, Genesis, 10-11.
God, the God whom Israel must serve to the exclusion of all rival deities, Baal in particular. This claim is most deeply rooted in the fact that YHWH God of Israel created all things by his powerful word (Ps 33:6), including the sending of the very first rains in the beginning, and has ever since sustained all things by his powerful word (Heb 1:3), including the sending of all rains subsequent to the beginning.

V. Conclusion

One central aspect of the kerygmatic message of Genesis 1-2 is now clear: Not Baal but "The LORD he is God! The LORD he is God!" This is true simply because it had rained.  

63 With this article I wish as a student and colleague to express my appreciation to Dr. Kline for the scholarly service he has rendered and continues to render to the Church.

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ARTICLE VII.
PRIMEVAL CHRONOLOGY.

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THE question of the possible reconciliation of the results of scientific inquiry respecting the antiquity of man and the age of the world with the Scripture chronology has been long and earnestly debated. On the one hand, scientists, deeming them irreconcilable, have been led to distrust the divine authority of the Scriptures; and, on the other hand, believers in the divine word have been led to look upon the investigations of science with an unfriendly eye, as though they were antagonistic to religious faith. In my reply to Bishop Colenso in 1863, I had occasion to examine the method and structure of the biblical genealogies, and incidentally ventured the remark\(^1\) that herein lay the solution of the whole matter. I said: "There is an element of uncertainty in a computation of time which rests upon genealogies, as the sacred chronology so largely does. Who is to certify us that the antediluvian and ante-Abrahamic genealogies have not been condensed in the same manner as the post-Abrahamic? . . . . Our current chronology is based upon the prima facie impression of these genealogies. But if these recently discovered indications of the antiquity of man, over which scientific circles are now so excited, shall, when carefully inspected and thoroughly weighed, demonstrate all that any have imagined they might demonstrate, what then? They will simply show that the popular

\(^1\) The Pentateuch Vindicated from the Aspersions of Bishop Colenso, p. 128 footnote.
chronology is based upon a wrong interpretation, and that, a select and partial register of ante-Abrahamic names has been mistaken for a complete one."

I here repeat, the discussion of the biblical genealogies above referred to, and add some further considerations which seem to me to justify the belief that the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 were not intended to be used, and cannot properly be used, for the construction of a chronology.

It can scarcely be necessary to adduce proof to one who has even a superficial acquaintance with the genealogies of the Bible, that these are frequently abbreviated by the omission of unimportant names. In fact, abridgment is the general rule, induced by the indisposition of the sacred writers to encumber their pages with more names than were necessary for their immediate purpose. This is so constantly the case, and the reason for it so obvious, that the occurrence of it need create no surprise anywhere, and we are at liberty to suppose it whenever anything in the circumstances of the case favors that belief.

The omissions in the genealogy of our Lord as given in Matthew 1 are familiar to all. Thus in verse 8 three names are dropped between Joram and Ozias (Uzziah), viz., Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25), Joash (2 Kings 12:1), and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1); and in verse 11 Jehoiakim is omitted after Josiah (2 Kings 23:34; 1 Chron. 3:16); and in verse 1 the entire genealogy is summed up in two steps, "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Other instances abound elsewhere; we mention only a few of the most striking. In 1 Chronicles 26:24 we read in a list of appointments made by King David (see 1 Chron. 24:3; 25:1; 26:26), that Shebuel, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures; and again in 1 Chronicles 23:15, 16, we find it written, "The sons of Moses were Gershom and Eliezer. Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel was the chief." Now it is absurd to suppose that the author of Chronicles was so grossly ignorant as to suppose that the grandson of Moses could

1 He is called in 1 Cron. 24:20 a son of Amram, the ancestor of Moses; for Shubael and Shebuel are in all probability mere orthographic variations of the same name.
be living in the reign of David, and appointed by him to a responsible office. Again, in the same connection (1 Chron. 26:31), we read that "among the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief;" and this Jerijah, or Jeriah (for the names are identical), was, according to 23:19, the first of the sons of Hebron, and Hebron was (v. 12) the son of Kohath, the son of Levi (v. 6). So that if no contraction in the genealogical lists is allowed, we have the great-grandson of Levi holding a prominent office in the reign of David.

The genealogy of Ezra is recorded in the book which bears his name; but we learn from another passage, in which the same line of descent is given, that it has been abridged by the omission of six consecutive names. This will appear from the following comparison, viz.:

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<tr>
<th>1 Chronicles 6:3-14</th>
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<td>1. Aaron</td>
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<td>21. Azariah</td>
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<td>22. Seraiah</td>
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Ezra
Still further, Ezra relates (viii. 1, 2): --
"These are now the chief of their fathers, and this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babyl-
on, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king. Of the sons of
Phinehas, Gershom. Of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel. Of
the sons of David, Hattush."

Here, if no abridgment of the genealogy is allowed,
we should have a great-grandson and a grandson of Aaron,
and a son of David coming up with Ezra from Babylon
after the captivity.

This disposition to abbreviate genealogies by the omis-
sion of whatever is unessential to the immediate purpose
of the writer is shown by still more remarkable reduc-
tions than those which we have been considering. Per-
sons of different degrees of relationship are sometimes
thrown together under a common title descriptive of the
majority, and all words of explanation, even those which
seem essential to the sense, are rigorously excluded, the
supplying of these chasms being left to the independent
knowledge of the reader. Hence several passages in the
genealogies of Chronicles have now become hopelessly
obscure. They may have been intelligible enough to con-
temporaries; but for those who have no extraneous sources
of information, the key to their explanation is wanting.

In other cases we are able to understand them, because
the information necessary to make them intelligible is
supplied from parallel passages of Scripture. Thus the
opening verses of Chronicles contain the following bald
list of names without a word of explanation, viz.: Adam,
Seth, Enosh; Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared; Enoch, Methu-
selah, Lamech; Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

We are not told who these persons are, how they were
related to each other, or whether they were related. The
writer presumes that his readers have the book of Gene-
sis in their hands, and that the simple mention of these
names in their order will be sufficient to remind them
that the first ten trace the line of descent from father to
son from the first to the second great progenitor of mankind; and that the last three are brothers, although nothing is said to indicate that their relationship is different from the preceding.

Again the family of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, is spoken of in the following terms in 1 Chron. i. 36: "The sons of Eliphaz: Teman and Omar, Zephi and Gatam, Kenaz and Timna, and Amalek."

Now, by turning to Genesis xxxvi. 11, 12, we shall see that the first five are sons of Eliphaz, and the sixth his concubine, who was the mother of the seventh. This is so plainly written in Genesis that the author of the Chronicles, were he the most inveterate blunderer, could not have mistaken it. But trusting to the knowledge of his readers to supply the omission, he leaves out the statement respecting Eliphaz's concubine, but at the same time connects her name and that of her son with the family to which they belong, and this though he was professedly giving a statement of the sons of Eliphaz.

So, likewise, in the pedigree of Samuel (or Shemuel, ver. 33, the difference in orthography is due to our translators, and is not in the original), which is given in 1 Chron. vi. in both an ascending and descending series. Thus in verses 22-24: "The sons of Kohath; Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son; Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son; Tahath his son," etc.

The extent to which the framer of this list has studied comprehensiveness and conciseness will appear from the fact, which no one would suspect unless informed from other source, that while the general law which prevails in it is that of descent from father to son, the third, fourth, and fifth names represent brothers. This is shown by a comparison of Ex. vi. 24, and the parallel genealogy, 1 Chron. vi. 36, 37, 50 that the true line of descent is the following, viz.: --
Primeval Chronology. [April, 1849, p. 338]

The circumstance that the son of Kohath is called in one list Amminadab, and in the other Izhar, is no real discrepancy and can create no embarrassment, since it is no unusual thing for the same person to have two names. Witness Abram and Abraham; Jacob and Israel; Joseph and Zaphenath-paneah, Gen. xli. 45, Hoshea, Jehoshua, Num. xiii. 16 (or Joshua) and Jeshua, Neh. viii. 17, Gideon and Jerubbaal, Judg. vi. 32, Solomon and Jedidia, 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25, Azariah and Uzziah, 2 Kings xv. I, 13, Daniel and Belshazzar, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Dan. i. 7; Saul and Paul, Thomas and Didymus, Cephas and Peter, and in profane history Cyaxares and Darius, Octavianus and Augustus, Napoleon and Bonaparte, Ferretti and Pius IX.

The genealogy of Moses and Aaron is thus stated in the sixth chapter of Exodus: --

Ver. 16. "And these are the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred and thirty and seven years."

17. "The sons of Gershon . . . . ."

18. "And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel; and the years of the life of Kohath were an hundred and thirty and three years."

19. "And the sons of Merari . . . . ."

20. "And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years."

21. "And the sons of Izhar . . . . ."

22. "And the sons of Uzziel . . . . ."
There is abundant proof that this genealogy has been condensed, as we have already seen that so many others have been, by the dropping of some of the less important names.

This is afforded, in the first place, by parallel genealogies of the same period; as that of Bezaleel (I Chron. ii. 18-20), which records seven generations from Jacob; and that of Joshua (I Chron. vii. 23-27), which records eleven. Now it is scarcely conceivable that there should be eleven links in the line of descent from Jacob to Joshua, and only four from Jacob to Moses.

A still more convincing proof is yielded by Num. iii. 19, 27, 28, from which it appears that the four sons of Kohath severally gave rise to the families of the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites; and that the number of the male members of these families of a month old and upward was 8,600 one year after the Exodus. So that, if no abridgment has taken place in the genealogy, the grandfather of Moses had, in the lifetime of the latter, 8,600 descendants of the male sex alone, 2,750 of them being between the ages of thirty and fifty (Num. iv. 36).

Another proof equally convincing is to be found in the fact that Levi's son Kohath was born before the descent into Egypt (Gen. xlvi. 11); and the abode of the children of Israel in Egypt continued 430 years (Ex. xii. 40, 41). Now as Moses was eighty years old at the Exodus (Ex. vii. 7) he must have been born more, than 350 years after Kohath, who consequently could not have been his own grandfather.

This genealogy, whose abbreviated character is so clearly established, is of special importance for the immediate purpose of this paper, because it might appear, at first sight, as though such an assumption was precluded in the present instance, and as though the letter of Scripture shut us up to the inevitable conclusion that there were
four links, and no more, from Jacob to Moses. The names which are found without deviation in all the genealogies are Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses (Ex. vi. 16-20; Num. iii. 17-19; xxvi. 57-59; I Chron. vi. 1-3, 16-18; xxiii. 6, 12, 13). Now unquestionably Levi was Jacob's own son. So likewise Kohath was the son of Levi (Gen. xlvi. 11) and born before the descent into Egypt. Amram also was the immediate descendant of Kohath. It does not seem possible, as Kurtz proposed, to insert the missing links between them. For, in the first place, according to Num. xxvi. 59, "The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom her mother bare to Levi in Egypt," this Jochebed being (Ex. vi. 20) Amram's aunt, or his father's sister. Now, it is true, that" a daughter of Levi " might have the general sense of a descendant of Levi, as the woman healed by our Lord (Luke xiii. 16) is called "a daughter of Abraham;" and her being born to Levi might simply mean that she sprang from him (comp. Gen. xlvi. 25).

But these expressions must here be taken in a strict sense, and Jochebed accordingly must have been Levi's own daughter and the sister of Kohath, who must in consequence have been Amram's own father. This appears from a second consideration, viz., that Amram was (Num. iii. 27) the father of one of the subdivisions of the Kohathites, these subdivisions springing from Kohath's own children and comprising together 8,600 male descendants. Moses' father surely could not have been the ancestor of one-fourth of this number in Moses' own days.

To avoid this difficulty Tiele and Keil assume that there were two Amrams, one the son of Kohath, another the father of Moses, who was a more remote descendant but bore the same name with his ancestor. This relieves the embarrassment created by the Amramites (Num. iii. 27) but is still liable to that which arises from making Jochebed the mother of Moses. And further, the structure of
the genealogy in Ex. vi. is such as to make this hypothe-
sis unnatural and improbable. Verse 16 names the three
sons of Levi, Gershom, Kohath, and Merari; ver. 17-19,
the sons of each in their order; ver. 20-22, the children
of Kohath's sons; ver. 23, 24, contain descendants of the
next generation, and ver. 25 the generation next follow-
ing. Now, according to the view of Tiele and Keil, we
must either suppose that the Amram, Izhar, and Uzziel
of ver. 20-22 are all different from the Amram, Izhar, and
Uzziel of ver. 18, or else that Amram, though belonging
to a later generation than Izhar and Uzziel, is introduced
before them, which the regular structure of the genealogy
forbids; and besides, the sons of Izhar and the sons of
Uzziel, who are here named, were the contemporaries of
Moses and Aaron the sons of Amram (Num. xvi. 1;
Lev. x. 4).

This subject may be relieved from all perplexity, how-
ever, by observing that Amram and Jochebed were not
the immediate parents, but the ancestors of Aaron and
Moses. How many generations may have intervened,
we cannot tell. It is indeed said (Ex. vi. 20; Num. xxvi.
59), that Jochebed bare them to Amram. But in the
language of the genealogies this simply means that they
were descended from her and from Amram. Thus, in Gen.
xlvii. 18, after recording the sons of Zilpah, her grandsons,
and her great-grandsons, the writer adds, "These are the
sons of Zilpah and these she bare unto Jacob,
even sixteen souls." The same thing recurs in the case
of Bilhah (ver. 25): "She bare these unto Jacob; all the
souls were seven." (Comp. also ver. 15, 22.) No one
can pretend here that the author of this register did not
use the terms understandingly of descendants beyond the
first generation. In like manner, according to Matt. i.
11, Josias begat his grandson Jechonias, and ver. 8, Jo-
ram begat his great-great-grandson Ozias. And in Gen.
x. 15-18 Canaan, the grandson of Noah, is said to have
begotten several whole nations, the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgasite, the Hivite, etc. (Comp. also Gen. xxv. 23; Deut. iv. 25; 2 Kings xx. 18; Isa, li, 2.)

Nothing can be plainer, therefore, than that, in the usage of the Bible, "to bear" and "to beget" are used in a wide sense to indicate descent, without restriction to the immediate offspring.¹

It is no serious objection to this view of the case that in Lev. x.4 Uzziel, Amram's brother, is called "the uncle of Aaron." The Hebrew word here rendered "uncle," though often specifically applied to a definite degree of relationship, has, both from etymology and usage, a much wider sense. A great-great-grand-uncle is still an uncle, and would properly be described by the term here used.

It may also be observed that in the actual history of the birth of Moses his parents are not called Amram and Jochebed. It is simply said (Ex. ii. 1), "and there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi."

After these preliminary observations, which were originally drawn up for another purpose, I come to the more immediate design of the present paper, by proceeding to inquire, whether the genealogies of Gen. v. and xi. are necessarily to be considered as complete, and embracing all the links in the line of descent from Adam to Noah and from Shem to Abraham. And upon this I remark --

1. That the analogy of Scripture genealogies is decidedly against such a supposition. In numerous other instances there is incontrovertible evidence of more or less abridgment. This may even be the case where various

¹ In Ruth iv, 17 Ruth's child is called "a son born to Naomi," who was Ruth's mother-in-law and not even an ancestor of the child in the strict sense. Zerubbabel is called familiarly the son of Shealtiel (Ezr, iii 2; Hag.i. 1), and is so stated to be in the genealogies of both Matt. i. 12 and Luke iii. 27, though in reality he was his nephew (1 Chron. iii. 17-19). That descent as reckoned in genealogies is not always that of actual parentage appears from the comparison of the ancestry of our Lord as given by Matthew and by Luke.
circumstances combine to produce a different impression at the outset. Nevertheless, we have seen that this first impression, may be dissipated by a more careful examination and a comparison of collateral data. The result of our investigations thus far is sufficient to show that it is precarious to assume that any biblical genealogy is designed to be strictly continuous, unless it can be subjected to some external tests which prove it to be so. And it is to be observed that the Scriptures furnish no collateral information whatever respecting the period covered by the genealogies now in question. The creation, the Flood, the call of Abraham, are great facts, which stand out distinctly in primeval sacred history. A few incidents respecting our first parents and their sons Cain and Abel are recorded. Then there is an almost total blank until the Flood, with nothing whatever to fill the gap, and nothing to suggest the length of time intervening but what is found in the genealogy stretching between these two points. And the case is substantially the same from the Flood to Abraham. So far as the biblical records go, we are left not only without adequate data, but without any data whatever, which can be brought into comparison with these genealogies for the sake of testing their continuity and completeness.

If, therefore, any really trustworthy data can be gathered from any source whatever, from any realm of scientific or antiquarian research, which can be brought into comparison with these genealogies for the sake of determining the question, whether they have noted every link in the chain of descent, or whether, as in other manifest instances, links have been omitted, such data should be welcomed and the comparison fearlessly made. Science would simply perform the office, in this instance, which information gathered from other parts of Scripture is unhesitatingly allowed to do in regard to those genealogies previously examined.
And it may be worth noting here that a single particular in which a comparison may be instituted between the primeval history of man and Gen. v., suggests especial caution before affirming the absolute completeness of the latter. The letter of the genealogical record (v. 3) if we were dependent on it alone, might naturally lead us to infer that Seth was Adam's first child. But we know from chapter iv. that he had already had two sons, Cain and Abel, and from iv. 17 that he must have had a daughter, and from iv. 14 that he had probably had several sons and daughters, whose families had swollen to a considerable number before Adam's one hundred and thirtieth year, in which Seth was born. Yet of all this the genealogy gives us no inkling.

2. Is there not, however, a peculiarity in the construction of these genealogies which forbids our applying to them an inference drawn from others not so constructed? The fact that each member of the series is said to have begotten the one next succeeding, is, in the light of the wide use of this term which we have discovered in other cases, no evidence of itself that links have not been omitted. But do not the chronological statements introduced into these genealogies oblige us to regard them as necessarily continuous? Why should the author be so particular to state, in every case, with unfailing regularity, the age of each patriarch at the birth of his son, unless it was his design thus to construct a chronology of this entire period, and to afford his readers the necessary elements for a computation of the interval from the creation to the deluge and from the deluge to Abraham? And if this was his design, he must of course have aimed to make his list complete. The omission of even a single name would create an error.

But are we really justified in supposing that the author of these genealogies entertained such a purpose? It is a noticeable fact that he never puts them to such a use him-
self. He nowhere sums these numbers, nor suggests their summation. No chronological statement is deduced from these genealogies, either by him or by any inspired writer. There is no computation anywhere in Scripture of the time that elapsed from the creation or from the deluge, as there is from the descent into Egypt to the Exodus (Ex. xii. 40), or from the Exodus to the building of the temple (I Kings vi. 1). And if the numbers in these genealogies are for the sake of constructing a chronology, why are numbers introduced which have no possible relation to such a purpose? Why are we told how long each patriarch lived after the birth of his son, and what was the entire length of his life? These numbers are given with the same regularity as the age of each at the birth of his son; and they are of no use in making up a chronology of the period. They merely afford us a conspectus of individual lives. And for this reason doubtless they are recorded. They exhibit in these selected examples the original term of human life. They show what it was in the ages before the Flood. They show how it was afterwards individually narrowed down. But in order to this it was not necessary that every individual should be named in the line from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham, nor anything approaching it. A series of specimen lives, with the appropriate numbers attached, was all that was required. And, so far as appears, this is all that has been furnished us. And if this be the case, the notion of basing a chronological computation upon these genealogies is a fundamental mistake. It is putting them to a purpose that they were not designed to subserve, and to which from the method of their construction they are not adapted. When it is said, for example, that "Enosh lived ninety years and begat Kenan," the well-established usage of the word "begat" makes this statement equally true and equally accordant with analogy, whether Kenan was an immediate or a remote descendant of Enosh; wheth-
er Kenan was himself born, when Enosh was ninety years of age or one was born from whom Kenan sprang. These genealogies may yield us the minimum length of time that it is possible to accept for the period that they cover; but they can make no account of the duration represented by the names that have been dropped from the register, as needless for the author's particular purpose.

3. The abode of the children of Israel in Egypt affords for our present purpose the best Scripture parallel to the periods now under consideration. The greater part of this term of 430 years is left blank in the sacred history. A few incidents are mentioned at the beginning connected with the descent of Jacob and his family into Egypt and their settlement there. And at its close mention is made of some incidents in the life of Moses and the events leading to the Exodus. But with these exceptions no account is given of this long period. The interval is only bridged by a genealogy extending from Levi to Moses and Aaron and their contemporaries among their immediate relatives (Ex. vi. 16-26). This genealogy records the length of each man's life in the principal line of descent, viz., Levi (ver. 16), Kohath (ver. 18), Amram (ver. 20). The correspondence in the points just indicated with the genealogies of Gen. v. and xi., and the periods which they cover, is certainly remarkable. And as they proceeded from the same pen, we may fairly infer from the similarity of construction a similarity of design. Now it has been shown already that the genealogy from Levi to Moses cannot have recorded all the links in that line of descent, and that it could not, therefore, have been intended to be used as a basis of chronological computation. This is rendered absolutely certain by the explicit statement in Ex. xii. 40. It further appears from the fact that the numbers given in this genealogy exhibit the longevity of the patriarchs named, but cannot be so concatenated as to sum up the entire period; thus suggesting the inference that the
numbers in the other genealogies, with which we are now concerned, were given with a like design, and not with the view of enabling the reader to construct the chronology.

4. In so far as a valid argument can be drawn from the civilization of Egypt, its monuments and records, to show that the interval between the deluge and the call of Abraham must have been greater than that yielded by the genealogy in Gen. xi., the argument is equally valid against the assumption that this genealogy was intended to supply the elements for a chronological computation.

For altogether apart from his inspiration Moses could not have made a mistake here. He was brought up at the court of Pharaoh, and was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, of which his legislation and the marvellous table of the affinities of nations in Gen. x., at once the admiration and the despair of ethnologists, furnish independent proof. He lived in the glorious period of the great Egyptian monarchy. Its monuments were then in their freshness and completeness. None of the irreparable damage, which time and ruthless barbarism have since wrought, had been suffered then. The fragmentary records, which scholars are now laboriously struggling to unravel and combine, with their numerous gaps and hopeless obscurities, were then in their integrity and well understood. Egypt's claim to a hoary antiquity was far better known to Moses, and he was in a position to gain a far more intelligent comprehension of it than is possible at present; for exuberant materials were ready at his hand, of which only a scanty and disordered remnant now survives. If, then, Egyptian antiquity contradicts the current chronology, it simply shows that this chronology is based upon an unfounded assumption. It rests upon a fundamentally mistaken interpretation of the ante-Abrahamic genealogy, and assigns a meaning to it which Moses could never have intended that it should have.

As is well known, the texts of the Septuagint and of the
Samaritan Pentateuch vary systematically from the Hebrew in both the genealogies of Gen. v. and xi. According to the chronologies based on these texts respectively, the interval between the Flood and the birth of Abraham was 292 (Hebrew), 942 (Samaritan), or 1172 years (Septuagint). Some have been disposed in this state of the case to adopt the chronology drawn from the Septuagint, as affording here the needed relief. But the superior accuracy of the Hebrew text in this instance, as well as generally elsewhere, can be incontrovertibly established. This resource, then, is a broken reed. It might, however, be plausibly imagined, and has in fact been maintained, that these changes were made by the Septuagint translators or others for the sake of accommodating the Mosaic narrative to the imperative demands of the accepted Egyptian antiquity. But if this be so, it is only a further confirmation of the argument already urged that the ante-Abrahamic genealogy cannot have been intended by Moses as a basis of chronological computation. He knew as much of the age of Egypt as the Septuagint translators or any in their day. And if so brief a term as this genealogy yields, was inadmissible in their judgment, and they felt constrained to enlarge it by the addition of nearly nine centuries is it not clear that Moses never could have intended that the genealogy should be so interpreted?

Furthermore, it seems to me worthy of consideration whether the original intent with which these textual changes were made, was after all a chronological one. The principle by which they are obviously and uniformly governed, is rather suggestive of a disposition to make a more symmetrical division of individual lives than to protract the entire period. The effect of these changes upon the chronology may have been altogether an afterthought.

Thus in the Hebrew text of Gen. v. the ages of different patriarchs at the birth of the son named are quite ir-
regular, and vary from sixty-five to one hundred and eighty-seven. But the versions seek to bring them into closer conformity, and to introduce something like a regular gradation. The Septuagint proceeds on the assumption that patriarchs of such enormous longevity should be nearly two centuries old at the birth of their son. Accordingly, when, in the Hebrew, they fall much below this standard, one hundred years are added to the number preceding the birth of the son and the same amount deducted from the number following his birth; the total length of each life is thus preserved without change, the proportion of its different parts alone being altered. The Samaritan, on the other hand, assumes a gradual diminution in the ages of successive patriarchs prior to the birth of their son, none rising to a century after the first two. When, therefore, the number in the Hebrew text exceeds one hundred, one hundred is deducted and the same amount added to the years after the son was born. In the case of Lamech the reduction is greater still, in order to effect the necessary diminution. Accordingly the years assigned to the several antediluvian patriarchs before the birth of their son in these several texts is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Septuagint</th>
<th>Samaritan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>205</td>
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<td>Enosh</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>190</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenan</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahalalel</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jared</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enoch</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methuselah</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamech</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noah</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A simple glance at these numbers is sufficient to show that the Hebrew is the original, from which the others

1 The number varies in different manuscripts.
diverge on the one side or the other, according to the principle which they have severally adopted. It likewise creates a strong presumption that the object contemplated in these changes was to make the lives more symmetrical, rather than to effect an alteration in the chronology.

5. The structure of the genealogies in Gen. v. and xi. also favors the belief that they do not register all the names in these respective lines of descent. Their regularity seems to indicate intentional arrangement. Each genealogy includes ten names, Noah being the tenth from Adam, and Terah the tenth from Noah. And each ends with a father having three sons, as is likewise the case with the Cainite genealogy (iv. 17-22). The Sethite genealogy (chap. v.) culminates in its seventh member, Enoch, who "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." The Cainite genealogy also culminates in its seventh member, Lamech, with his polygamy, bloody revenge, and boastful arrogance. The genealogy descending from Shem divides evenly at its fifth member, Peleg; and "in his days was the earth divided." Now as the adjustment of the genealogy in Matt. i. into three periods of fourteen generations each is brought about by dropping the requisite number of names, it seems in the highest degree probable that the symmetry of these primitive genealogies is artificial rather than natural. It is much more likely that this definite number of names fitting into a regular scheme has been selected as sufficiently representing the periods to which they belong, than that all these striking numerical coincidences should have happened to occur in these successive instances.

It may further be added that if the genealogy in chap. xi. is complete, Peleg, who marks the entrance of a new period, died while all his ancestors from Noah onward were still living. Indeed Shem, Arphaxad, Selah, and Eber must all have outlived not only Peleg, but all the
generations following as far as and including Terah. The whole impression of the narrative in Abraham's days is that the Flood was an event long since past, and that the actors in it had passed away ages before. And yet if a chronology is to be constructed out of this genealogy, Noah was for fifty-eight years the contemporary of Abra- ham, and Shem actually survived him thirty-five years, provided xi. 26 is to be taken in its natural sense, that Abraham was born in Terah's seventieth year. This conclusion is well-nigh incredible. The calculation which leads to such a result, must proceed upon a wrong as- sumption.

On these various grounds we conclude that the Scrip- tures furnish no data for a chronological computation prior to the life of Abraham; and that the Mosaic records do not fix and were not intended to fix the precise date either of the Flood or of the creation of the world.

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God's Perspective on Man
Vernon C. Grounds

Philosophy and science are both bafflingly inclusive in their subject-matter. Yet each of these disciplines is essentially an attempt to answer a simple question. Taken in its broadest sense, science is dedicated to the task of answering that question which perpetually haunts our minds, "How?" A simple question indeed! But to explain how grass grows on our earth or how a machine functions or how galaxies zoom through the vast emptiness of space has been one of the great enterprises of modern civilization, perhaps its greatest. On the other hand, philosophy, taken in its broadest sense, is also dedicated to the task of answering a simple question which never quits plaguing us, "Why?"

Though the why-question like the how-question is deceptively simple, it often teases us nearly out of thought. So, for example, a child asks innocently, "Why was anything at all?"--and the sages are reduced to silence.

We who are amateurs in the philosophical enterprise find ourselves bewildered as we glance at its profusion of rival schools and listen to their in-group jargon. Fortunately, though, one of its most illustrious practitioners, Immanuel Kant, provides us with helpful orientation. In the Handbook which he prepared for the students who studied with him at the University of Koenigsburg a century and a half ago, Kant points out that philosophy, a disciplined attempt to explain why, concerns itself with four key-problems.¹ First, what can we know? Second, what ought we do? Third, what may we hope? Fourth, what is man? In a way that last question, "What is man?", the problem of anthropology or the nature of human nature, includes the other three. For man is that curious creature who
insists on asking questions. Man is that unique animal who tirelessly cross examines himself about himself. Man is that relentless interrogator who probingly wonders what he can know and what he ought to do and what he may hope. Philosophy, therefore, twists and turns around the person and the philosopher. Every question he raises is inescapably enmeshed with the question concerning himself as the questioner, "What is man?"

The fourth key-problem in Kant's succinct outline of philosophy echoes a recurrent Biblical theme. In
Job 7:17 that very question appears. In Psalm 8:4 that question re-emerges, and Hebrews 2:5 repeats that same question. Thus we are not surprised that philosophy, which like theology is a why discipline, puts anthropology or the problem of man front and center. But whether we label ourselves philosophers or theologians or scientists, every one of us is a human being who grapples with the issue of self-identity. Hence the question, "What is man?", concerns us individually at the deepest levels of our existence; for that question is really the haunting question, "Who am I?"

**Man as Garbage**

Before proceeding to present God's perspective on man, which can be done only because we presuppose that the Bible is God's Word spoken to us through human words, let me remind you of some competing models of man that are widely accepted today. There is of course the purely materialistic concept which holds that man is nothing but, as Bertrand Russell elegantly phrased it, an accidental collocation of atoms. This concept, though advanced with the blessing of contemporary science, is by no means excitingly novel. In the 18th century self-styled *illuminati* scoffed that man is nothing but an ingenious system of portable plumbing. In pre-Hitler Germany an unflattering devaluation of *Homo sapiens* was jokingly circulated: "The human body contains enough fat to make 7 bars of soap, enough iron to make a medium sized nail, enough phosphorus for 2000 matchheads, and enough sulphur to rid oneself of fleas." When human bodies were later turned into soap in the extermination camps, the grim logic of that joke was probably being worked out to its ultimate conclusion.

Today, tragically, that concept, apparently certified by science, is articulated by a celebrated novelist like Joseph Heller. In *Catch 22* he describes a battle. Yossarian, the book's hero, discovers that Snowden, one of
his comrades, has been mortally wounded. Hoping that none of us will be unduly nauseated by it, I quote this vivid passage.

Yossarian ripped open the snaps of Snowden's flack suit and heard himself scream wildly as Snowden's insides slithered down to the floor in a soggy pile and just kept dripping out. A chunk of flack more than three inches big had shot into his other side just underneath the arm and blasted all the way through, drawing whole mottled quarts of Snowden along with it through the gigantic hole it made in his ribs as it blasted out. Yossarian screamed a second time and squeezed both hands over his eyes. His teeth were chattering in horror. He forced himself to look again. Here was God's plenty all right, he thought bitterly as he stared-liver, lungs, kidneys, ribs, stomach and bits of the stewed tomatoes Snowden had eaten that day for lunch. Yossarian . . . turned away dizzily and began to vomit, clutching his burning throat . . .

"I'm cold," Snowden whimpered. "I'm cold."

"There, there," Yossarian mumbled mechanically in a voice too low to be heard. "There, there."

Yossarian was cold too, and shivering uncontrollably. He felt goose pimples clacking all over him as he gazed down despondently at the grim secret Snowden had spilled all over the messy floor. It was easy to read the message in his entrails. Man was matter, that was Snowden's secret. Drop him out a window and he'd fall. Set fire to him and he'll burn. Bury him and he'll rot like other kinds of garbage. The spirit gone, man is garbage. That was Snowden's secret.

Man is garbage. That, crudely stated, is a common view of human nature today. In the end, man is garbage-
an accidental collocation of atoms, destined, sooner or later, to rot and decay. To guard against any misunderstanding, let me say emphatically that from one perspective man is indeed garbage or will be. That appraisal is incontestably valid, provided man is not viewed as garbage and nothing but that. Man has other dimensions to his being which no full-orbed anthropology can ignore.

Man as Machine

A second concept, apparently endorsed by science, holds that man is essentially a machine, an incredibly complicated machine, no doubt, yet in the end nothing but a sort of mechanism. Typical is the opinion of Cambridge astronomer, Fred Hoyle, who writes in *The Nature of the Universe*:

> Only the biological processes of mutation and natural selection are needed to produce living creatures as we know them. Such creatures are no more than ingenious machines that have evolved as strange by-products in an odd corner of the universe. . . Most people object to this argument for the not very good reason that they do not like to think of themselves as machines.  

Like it or not, however, Hoyle insists, that is the fact. What is man? An ingenious machine—well, a whole complex of machines. R. Buckminster Fuller, whose genius seems to belie the truth of reductive mechanism, pictures man as

> a self-balancing, 28 jointed, adapter-based biped, an electro-chemical reduction plant, integral with the segregated storages of special energy extracts in storage batteries, for the subsequent actuation of thousands of hydraulic and pneumatic pumps, with motors attached; 62,000 miles of capillaries, millions of warning signals, railroad and conveyor systems; crushers and cranes. . .

and a universally distributed telephone system needing no service for seventy years if well managed; the whole
extraordinary complex mechanism guided with exquisite precision from a turret in which are located telescopic and microscopic self-registering and recording range finders, a spectroscope, et cetera.\(^4\)

That man from one perspective is a complex of exquisitely synchronized machines cannot be denied and need not be, provided human beings are not exhaustively reduced to that, and nothing but that. Man has other dimensions to his being which no full-orbed anthropology can ignore.

**Man as Animal**

Still another current concept of man holds that he is essentially an animal. Loren Eiseley, a distinguished scientist whose prose often reads like poetry, eloquently sets forth this model of humanity in his 1974 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article, "The Cosmic Orphan." What is man? He is a cosmic orphan, a primate which has evolved into a self-conscious, reflective, symbol-using animal. Man is a cosmic orphan, a person aware that he has been produced, unawares and unintentionally, by an impersonal process. Thus when this cosmic orphan inquires, "Who am I?", science gives him its definitive answer.

You are a changeling. You are linked by a genetic chain to all the vertebrates. The thing that is you bears the still-aching wounds of evolution in body and in brain. Your hands are made-over fins, your lungs come from a swamp, your femur has been twisted upright. Your foot is a re-worked climbing pad. You are a rag doll resewn from the skins of extinct animals. Long ago, 2 million
years perhaps, you were smaller; your brain was not so large. We are not confident that you could speak. Seventy million years before that you were an even smaller climbing creature known as a tupaiid. You were the size of a rat. You ate insects. Now you fly to the moon.

Science, when pressed, admits that its explanation is a fairy tale. But immediately science adds:

That is what makes it true. Life is indefinite departure. That is why we are all orphans. That is why you must find your own way. Life is not stable. Everything alive is slipping through cracks and crevices in time, changing as it goes. Other creatures, however, have instincts that provide for them, holes in which to hide. They cannot ask questions. A fox is a fox, a wolf is a wolf, even if this, too, is illusion. You have learned to ask questions. That is why you are an orphan. You are the only creation in the universe who knows what it has been. Now you must go on asking questions while all the time you are changing. You will ask what you are to become. The world will no longer satisfy you. You must find your way, your own true self. "But how can I?" wept the Orphan, hiding his head. "This is magic. I do not know what I am. I have been too many things." "You have indeed," said all the scientists together.

Something still more must be appended, though, science insists as it explains man to himself.

Your body and your nerves have been dragged about and twisted in the long effort of your ancestors to stay alive, but now, small orphan that you are, you must know a secret, a secret magic that nature has given you. No other creature on the planet possesses it. You use language. You are a symbol-shifter. All this is hidden in your brain and transmitted from one generation to another. You are a time-binder; in your head the symbols that mean things in the world outside can fly about untrammeled. You can combine them differently into a
new world of thought, or you can also hold them tenaciously throughout a life-time and pass them on to others.\textsuperscript{5}

Expressed in Eiseley's semi-poetic prose, this concept, while confessedly a fairy tale, has about it an aura of not only plausibility but nobility as well. Sadly, however, when man is reduced to an animal and nothing but an animal, the aura of nobility vanishes and bestiality starts to push humanity into the background. Think of man as portrayed in contemporary art and literature and drama. Take, illustratively, the anthropology which underlies the work of a popular playwright like Tennessee Williams. What is the Good News preached by this evangelist, as he calls himself? His Gospel, interpreted by Robert Fitch, is this:

Man is a beast. The only difference between man and the other beasts is that man is a beast that knows he will die. The only honest man is the unabashed egotist. This honest man pours contempt upon the mendacity, the lies, the hypocrisy of those who will not acknowledge their egotism. The one irreducible value is life, which you must cling to as you can and use for the pursuit of pleasure and of power. The specific ends of life are sex and money. The great passions are lust and rapacity. So the human comedy is an outrageous medley of lechery, alcoholism, homosexuality, blasphemy, greed, brutality, hatred, obscenity. It is not a tragedy because it has not the dignity of a tragedy. The man who plays his role in it has on himself the marks of a total depravity. And as for the ultimate and irreducible value, life, that in the end is also a lie.\textsuperscript{6}

These, then, are three contemporary models of man,
all of them rooted in a philosophy of reductive natural-ism. First, man is nothing but matter en route to be-
coming garbage. Second, man is nothing but a complex
of exquisitely synchronized machines. Third, man is
nothing but an animal, a mutation aware that, as a
cosmic orphan, it lives and dies in melancholy loneli-
ness.

**Man as God's Creature**

Now over against these views let us look at man
from God's perspective, unabashedly drawing our
anthropology from the Bible. As we do so, please bear
in mind that we are not disputing those valid insights
into the nature of human nature which are derived
from philosophy, no less than science. Suppose, too, we
take for granted that psychology and sociology are
properly included within the scientific orbit. In other
words, we are assuming that man is multidimensional
and that anthropology therefore requires God's input if
it is to give us a full-orbed picture of its subject.
To begin with, then, the Bible asserts that man is
God's creature. So in Genesis 2:1 this statement is
made: "The Lord God formed man of dust from the
ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of
life and man became a living soul." Exactly how God
formed man Genesis does not tell us; it does tell us,
though, that man is not an accident, a happenstance, a
personal mutation ground out by an impersonal process.
On the contrary, Genesis tells us explicitly that man
owes his existence to God's limitless power, wisdom,
and love. It tells us explicitly that man-dust inbreathe-
by deity-cannot be explained except in terms of crea-
turehood. Which means what? As creature, man is
qualitatively different from God, utterly dependent
upon God, and ultimately determined by His creator.
It is God Who determines man's nature and determines,
likewise, the laws and limits of human existence.
Obviously, the implications of this Creator-creature
relationship are enormous. Few reductive naturalists have perceived them as penetratingly as Jean-Paul Sartre, the foremost spokesman for atheistic existentialism now living. Realizing what follows if indeed man has been made by God, Sartre repudiates the very notion of creation. Understandably so! If there is no Creator, then there is no fixed human nature, and man has unbounded freedom. He can decide who he will be and what he will do. That is why Sartre postulates atheism without stopping to argue for it.

Atheistic existentialism, which I represent, states that if God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man, or, as Heidegger says, human reality. What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means that, first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence. . . . If existence really does precede essence, there is no ex-
plaining things away by reference to a fixed and given human nature. In other words, there is no determinism, man is free, man is freedom. On the other hand, if God does not exist, we find no values or commands to turn to which legitimize our conduct. So, in the bright realm of values, we have no excuse behind us, nor justification before us. We are alone, with no excuses.\(^7\)

Thus in Sartre's opinion only if man is not a creature can he be genuinely free, free to shape his own nature, free to run his own life, free to pick and choose his own values. And Sartre is right. Grant that man is a creature, and you must grant that he can never sign a declaration of independence, cutting himself free from God. He is inseparably related to God, finding fulfillment and obedience to his Maker's will. Hence Paul Tillich, in tacit agreement with Sartre, argues that the modern repudiation of God springs from man's fierce desire to renounce his creaturely status. In Tillich's own words:

God as a subject makes me into an object which is nothing more than an object. He deprives me of my subjectivity because he is all-powerful and all-knowing. I revolt and try to make him into an object, but the revolt fails and becomes desperate. God appears as the invincible tyrant, the being in contrast with whom all other beings are without freedom and subjectivity. He is equated with the recent tyrants who with the help of terror try to transform everything into a mere object, a thing among things, a cog in the machine they control. He becomes the model of every thing against which Existentialism revolted. This is the God Nietzsche said had to be killed because nobody can tolerate being made into a mere object of absolute knowledge and absolute control. This is the deepest root of atheism.\(^8\)
Tillich, alas, grossly misconceives the Creator-creature relationship; but one thing he profoundly apprehends. Man as God's creature can never sign a declaration of independence from his Creator. That is the basic fact of human existence.

**Man as God's Image**

In the next place, the Bible asserts that man is *God's image*. Genesis 1:26 announces this second momentous fact of human existence rather undramatically. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." To interpret the full significance of the intriguing phrase, the image of God, is plainly beyond my competence. But its central thrust is undeniable. Man was created not only by God and for God but also like God. He was created a finite person reflecting the being of infinite Personhood. Qualitatively different from God and absolutely dependent upon his Creator, man was endowed with the capacity of responding to the divine Person in love and obedience and trust, enjoying a fellowship of unimaginable beatitude.

My purpose is not to defend the audacious claim that the unimpressive biped whom Desmond Morris labels the naked ape is indeed God's image. But that audacious claim loses at least some of its initial incredibility when one takes into account man's extraordinary characteristics. These have been succinctly summarized by Mortimer J. Adler in that study, *The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes*, which challenges reductive naturalism to rethink its inadequate anthropology.

1. Only man employs a propositional language, only man uses verbal symbols, only man makes sentences; i.e., only man is a discursive animal.
2. Only man makes tools, builds fires, erects shelters, fabricates clothings; i.e., only man is a technological animal.
3. Only man enacts laws or sets up his own rules of behavior and thereby constitutes his social life, organizing his association with his fellows in a variety of different ways; i.e., only man is a political, not just a gregarious, animal.

4. Only man has developed, in the course of generations, a cumulative cultural tradition, the transmission of which constitutes human history; i.e., only man is a historical animal.

5. Only man engages in magical and ritualistic practices; i.e., only man is a religious animal.

6. Only man has a moral conscience, a sense of right and wrong, and of values; i.e., only man is an ethical animal.

7. Only man decorates or adorns himself or his artifacts, and makes pictures or statues for the non-utilitarian purpose of enjoyment; i.e., only man is an aesthetic animal.

Man, the animal who is discursive, technological, political, historical, religious, ethical, and aesthetic, certainly seems unique enough to lend some plausibility to the Biblical claim that he was created in God's image. That audacious claim, which does not impress Adler as preposterous, also receives powerful endorsement from the well-known physicist, William G. Pollard. How better, he inquires, can man be designated than the image of God? His cogent argument for this position cannot now be rehearsed; but his conclusion, it seems to me, deserves to be heard even by those of us who are anti-evolutionists:

Starting from the perspective of the mid-twentieth century, we are able to see two very fundamental aspects of the phenomenon of man which would not have been evident before. One of these is the conversion of the biosphere into the noosphere. The other is the miraculous correspondence between the fabrications of man's mind
and the inner design of nature, as evidenced by the applicability of abstract mathematical systems to the laws of nature in physics. Both of these quite new perspectives strongly support the contention that man is after all made in the image of God. What we have come to realize is that there is no scientific reason why God cannot create an element of nature from other elements of nature by working within the chances and accidents which provide nature with her indeterminism and her freedom. We also see in a new way that the fact that man is indeed an integral part of nature in no way precludes his bearing the image of the designer of nature. Or to put it another way, there is nothing to prevent God from making in His image an entity which is at the same time an integral part of nature.  

Regardless of how persuasive or unpersuasive we may judge Pollard's argument to be, the belief that man is God's image supplies the only solid ground for that much-praised, much-prized value of Western civilization-man's inherent dignity. For what is it that imbues man with dignity? If he is nothing but garbage or a complex mechanism or an over-specialized animal, why ascribe to him a worth that is literally incalculable? Why follow the teaching of Jesus Christ and impute to human beings a dignity which is best articulated by the phrase, the sacredness of personality? That Jesus Christ does impute so high a dignity to human beings is indisputable in the light of the Gospel. Indeed, He imputes to human beings a dignity so high as to dichotomize nature. On the one side, Jesus Christ puts the whole of created reality; on the other, He puts man; and axiologically, or in terms of his worth, man outweighs nature. Thus in Matthew 6:28-30 our Lord as-
signs to man a worth above and beyond the whole botanical order. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" But why is man, if merely one more emergent in the evolutionary process, valued above and beyond rarest roses or exotic orchids? Again, in Matthew 10:29-31 our Lord imputes to man a worth above and beyond the whole avian order. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." But why is man valued above and beyond parakeets and falcons?

Once more, in Matthew 12:12 our Lord imputes to man a worth above and beyond the whole zoological order as He exclaims, "How much more valuable is a person than a sheep!" Come to Denver for the National Western Stock Show held annually in January, and you will be astonished at the fabulous prices paid for champion steers, as much as $52,000. Remember by contrast that an average person even in today's inflated economy is worth about one dollar chemically. Then why is man valued above and beyond blue-ribbon steers?

Furthermore, in Matthew 16:26 our Lord imputes to man a worth above and beyond the whole sweep of created reality. "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Why does Jesus Christ value man above the entire planet and beyond all the cosmos? Why? Man is unique because he alone is God's image-bearer; and as such he possesses
inherent dignity and incalculable worth. As finite person reflecting the inexhaustible realities and mysteries of infinite Personhood, he cannot be valued too highly. Yet of what practical significance is this evaluation of man, grounded in his dignity as the image of God? Is not this belief just one more element in an outmoded theology? Let Leslie Newbigin answer.

During World War II, Hitler sent men to the famous Bethel Hospital to inform Pastor Bodelschwingh, its director, that the State could no longer afford to maintain hundreds of epileptics who were useless to society and only constituted a drain on scarce resources, and that orders were being issued to have them destroyed. Bodelschwingh confronted them in his room at the entrance to the Hospital and fought a spiritual battle which eventually sent them away without having done what they were sent to do. He had no other weapon for the battle than the simple affirmation that these were men and women made in the image of God and that to destroy them was to commit a sin against God which would surely be punished. What other argument could he have used?11

Yes, and what other argument was needed? Abandon belief in man as God's image, and in the long run you abandon belief in human dignity.

Man as God's Prodigal

In the third place, the Bible asserts that man is God's prodigal. Plants, birds, animals are instinctually programmed. They move in a predictable course from birth to death. But man is that peculiar creature who, possessing intelligence and freedom, may choose to behave in ways that are self-frustrating and self-destructive. The Spanish philosopher, Ortega Y. Gassett, remarks that, "While the tiger cannot cease being a tiger,
cannot be dehumanized. Why, though, is man always in danger of failing to become what he potentially could be? Why does he, as a matter of fact, live in a state of ambivalence and contradiction, the animal whose nature it is to act contrary to his nature? Back in 1962 Dr. Paul MacLean suggested, some of you may recall, the theory of schizophysiology, speculating that man is radically self-divided because he has inherited three brains which are now required to function in unity. The oldest of these is reptilian; the second is derived from the lower animals; the third and most recent is the source of man's higher mental characteristics. Hence the brain of Homo sapiens is the scene of unceasing tension. Why wonder, therefore, if unlike other animals he is erratically unpredictable?


When one contemplates the streak of insanity running through human history, it appears highly probable that homo sapiens is a biological freak... the result of some remarkable mistake in the evolutionary process... Somewhere along the line of his ascent, something has gone wrong.  

I will not stop to consider Koestler's suggestion that with the help of psychopharmocology the evolutionary mistake which is man may hopefully be corrected. I simply inquire as to what has gone wrong. Koestler has his own conjecture, but I prefer to accept the explanation advanced in Scripture. Man, instead of living in a self-fulfilling fellowship with God, a fellowship of trust and obedience and love, misused his freedom. He did as the younger brother did in our Lord's parable of
the prodigal son: he turned away from his Father in the
name of freedom. Man chose in an aboriginal catastro-
phe to transgress the laws and limits established by his
Creator. He became a rebel. Thus God cries out in
Isaiah 1:2, "I have brought up children and they have
rebelled against me," a lament which echoes beyond
the Jewish nation and reverberates over the whole
human family. A planetary prodigal, man is thus in
self-willed alienation from God, an exile wandering
East of Eden, squandering his patrimony (think of our
problems of pollution and starvation), living in misery
and frustration, unable to be what he ought to be and
do what he ought to do, self-divided and self-
destructive. The Biblical view of man as God's image
who is now God's prodigal, a rebel and a sinner, im-
presses many of our contemporaries as incredibly
mythological. Yet it impresses some of us as more
congruent with the realities of history, psychology, and
sociology, that any of its secular rivals.

Man as God's Problem

In the fourth place, the Bible, which we believe gives
us God's perspective on man, asserts that man, God's
creature, God's image, God's prodigal, has become
God's problem through the aboriginal catastrophe of
self-chosen alienation. Joseph Wood Krutch, a noted student of literature who retired to Arizona and there devoted himself to the study of nature, sat one day on a mountain pondering a wild idea. What if in the creative process God has stopped after the fifth day? What if there had been no sixth day which saw the advent of man? Would that have been a wiser course for infinite wisdom to follow? After all, we read in Genesis 6:5, 6 that God indulged in some sober second thoughts about man, His own image turned into a prodigal. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." One might interpret the judgment of the flood as a sort of huge eraser which God used to rub out His mistake! Moreover, the Bible does not hesitate to say that man, God's image and God's prodigal, has become God's heartache. Yes, unhesitatingly, the Bible describes the divine reaction to human sin as a reaction of intensest grief. So in the prophecy of Hosea 11 we come across a text which, granting that the language is anthropopathic or attributing human emotions to God, portrays a heartbroken Creator:

When Israel was a child I loved him as a son and brought him out of Egypt. But the more I called to him, the more he rebelled, sacrificing to Baal and burning incense to idols. I trained him from infancy, I taught him to walk, I held him in my arms. But he doesn't know or even care that it was I who raised him. As a man would lead his favorite ox, so I led Israel with my ropes of love. I loosened his muzzle so he could eat. I myself have stopped and fed him. . . . Oh, how can I give you up, my Ephraim? How can I let you go? How can I forsake you like Adam and Zeboiim? My heart cries out within me; how I long to help you!
Listening to that pathetic outpouring over the people of Israel and by extension over people everywhere, we turn back in memory to the day in the first century when God incarnate looked upon the city of Jerusalem and wept.

God's creature and God's image, self-constituted as God's prodigal, man is not only God's heartache but also God's problem. What can the Creator do with the creature who has rebelliously prostituted his God-bestowed capacities? Should God admit failure? Should God destroy man as a tragic blunder? Should He send this sinful creature into eternal exile? God, if I may be allowed an anthropomorphism no more crude than those the Bible uses, has a God-sized problem on His hands. In His holiness He cannot wink at sin, pretending it does not matter. He cannot lightly pardon man's guilty disobedience. No, His justice requires that the sinner be punished; and yet to send man into eternal exile would mean the frustration of God's very purpose in creating this creature. For as best we can infer from the Bible, God Who is love was motivated by love to expand the orbit of beatitude by sharing His own joyful experience of love with finite persons who could respond to His love with their love. So what can God do? Blot out His blunder and stand forever baffled in the fulfillment of His desire by the will of a mere creature? God's dilemma is brought to a sharp focus in Romans 3:25, where the apostle Paul writes that God must be just while at the same time somehow justifying the sinner. God must remain loyal to the demands of His holiness and justice, yet forgive man, cleanse him, transform him, and only then welcome him into the eternal fellowship of holy love. This is certainly a God-sized problem, a dilemma which might seem to baffle even the resources of Deity.

But the Gospel is Good News precisely because of the amazing strategy by which God resolves His own
God-sized dilemma. And that strategy is the amazing strategy of the Cross. Incarnate in Jesus Christ, a Man at once truly divine and truly human, God dies on the cross bearing the full burden of the punishment human sin deserves. But in His Easter victory He breaks the power of the grave. And now He offers forgiveness, cleansing, transformation, and eternal fellowship with Himself to any man, who magnetized by Calvary love, will respond to the Gospel in repentance and faith. This, most hastily sketched, is God's solution to the problem of man. What a costly solution! Its cost, not even a sextillion of computers could ever compute!

I am one of those rather weakminded people who find chess too exhausting for their feeble brains. But I admire those intelligences of higher order who can play that intricate game with ease and pleasure. Paul Morphy, in his day a world champion chessman, stopped at an art gallery in England to inspect a painting of which he had often heard, "Checkmate!" The title explained the picture. On one side of the chessboard sat a leering devil; opposite him was a young man in despair. For the artist had so arranged the pieces that the young man's king was trapped. "Checkmate!" Intrigued and challenged, Morphy carefully studied the location of the pieces. Finally he exclaimed, "Bring me a chess board. I can still save him." He had hit on one adroit move which changed the situation and rescued the young man from his predicament. That is what God has done for all of us in Jesus Christ. By the mind-stunning maneuver of the Christ-event He has provided salvation from the consequences of our sin. He has opened up the way for His prodigals in their self-imposed exile to return home, forgiven, restored, welcomed unconditionally into the Father's loving fellowship.

**Man's Possibility**

Having discussed man's origin, and nature--man as
God's creature, image, prodigal, and problem—may I merely mention man's possibility as Biblically disclosed? For Scripture asserts that by repentance and faith man may enter into a new relationship with God, becoming God's child, God's friend, God's colaborer, and so being God's glory in this world and the world beyond time and space.

Instead of existing as Eiseley's cosmic orphan, man can enter into a filial relationship of obedient love with the Heavenly Father. Instead of existing in hostile estrangement from God, man can enter into a relationship with his Creator which is akin to the intimacy of mature friendship on its highest plane. Instead of existing in frustration, feeling that all his labor is a futile business of drawing water in a sieve, man can enter into a relationship of cooperative creativity with God; he can find fulfillment as he develops the potentials of our planet and eventually perhaps those of outer space. He can find fulfillment, too, functioning in his society as salt and light and yeast. He can also find fulfillment as he follows the law of neighbor love, sharing what-
ever good he may have, and sharing especially the Good News that God in love longs for the human family to be coextensive with His divine family. Instead of anticipating blank nonentity after he has died, man can enter into a relationship with God which will last through death and on through eternity as a conscious union of finite persons with infinite Person.

What a magnificent model of man this is! What a gulf stretches between it and those models of man proposed by reductive naturalism! So I close by voicing my agreement with that perceptive Jewish scholar, Abraham Heschel,

It is an accepted fact that the Bible has given the world a new concept of God. What is not realized is the fact that the Bible has given the world a new vision of man. The Bible is not a book about God; it is a book about man.

From the perspective of the Bible:
Who is man? A being in travail with God's dreams and designs, with God's dream of a world redeemed, of reconciliation of heaven and earth, of a mankind which is truly His image, reflecting His wisdom, justice and compassion. God's dream is not to be alone, to have mankind as a partner in the drama of continuous creation.14

I agree with that enthusiastically--except that in my opinion the Gospel of Jesus Christ adds to Heschel's statement heights and depths which Old Testament anthropology only intimates.

In all of our work, then, whether in science or any other vocation, may we strive to see man from God's perspective, remembering that God's model of authentic personhood is Jesus Christ. May our anthropology be more than a theoretical conviction. May it serve as a dynamic which shapes our own lives.
REFERENCES

8Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.
13Quoted in Denis Alexander, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COSMOLOGY IN GENESIS I IN RELATION TO ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN PARALLELS

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When in 1872 George Smith made known a Babylonian version of the flood story, which is part of the famous Gilgamesh Epic, and announced three years later a Babylonian creation story, which was published the following year in book form, the attention of OT scholars was assured and a new era of the study of Gn was inaugurated. Following the new trend numerous writers have taken it for granted that the opening narratives of Gn rest squarely on earlier Babylonian mythological texts and folklore. J. Skinner speaks, in summing up his discussion of the naturalization of Babylonian myths in Israel, of "Hebrew legends and their Babylonian originals." More specifically he writes "... it seems impossible to doubt that the cosmogony of Gn I rests on a conception of the process of creation fundamentally identical with that of the

1 The first news of this flood account was conveyed by Smith in 1872 through the columns of The Times and a paper read to the Society of Biblical Archaeology on Dec. 3, rS72, which was printed in the Society's Transactions, IT (1873), 13-34.
2 In a letter by Smith published in the Daily Telegraph, March 4, 1875.
4 John Skinner, Genesis (ICC; 2d ed.; Edinburgh, 1930), p. xi, who followed H. Gunkel, Genesis (HKAT; Gottingen, 1901), p. i; an English translation of the introduction of the commentary is published as The Legends of Genesis. The Biblical Saga and History, Schocken Book (New York, 1964). The term “legend” is the unfortunate translation of the German term “Sage” by which Gunkel meant the tradition of those who are not in the habit of writing, while “history” is written tradition. Gunkel did not intend to prejudice the historicity of a given narrative by calling it “legend.”
Enuma elish tablets." Thus by the turn of the century and continuing into the twenties and thirties the idea of a direct connection of some kind between the Babylonian and Hebrew accounts of creation was taken for granted, with the general consensus of critical opinion that the Hebrew creation story depended on a Babylonian original.

The last six decades have witnessed vast increases in knowledge of the various factors involved in the matter of parallels and relationships. W. G. Lambert and others⁶ remind us that one can no longer talk glibly about Babylonian civilization, because we now know that it was composed of three main strands before the end of the third millennium B.C. Furthermore, it is no longer scientifically sound to assume that all ideas originated in Mesopotamia and moved westward as H. Winckler's "pan-Babylonian" theory had claimed under the support of Friedrich Delitzsch and others.⁷ The cultural situation is extremely complex and diverse. Today we know that "a great variety of ideas circulated in ancient Mesopotamia."⁸

In the last few decades there has been a change in the way in which scholars understand religio-historical parallels to Gn 1-3. In the past, scholars have approached the ancient Near Eastern creation accounts in general from the point of view that there seems to be in man a natural curiosity that leads him to inquire intellectually, at some stage, "How did

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⁵ Skinner, op. cit., p. 47.
⁸ Lambert, op. cit., p. 289.
everything begin? How did the vast complex of life and nature originate?" In the words of a contemporary scholar, man sought "to abstract himself from immersion in present experience, and to conceive of the world as having had a beginning, and to make a sustained intellectual effort to account for it." Here the speaking about creator and creation in the ancient Near Eastern creation accounts is understood to be the result of an intellectual thought process. Over against this understanding of the ancient Near Eastern creation myths and myths of beginning there are scholars who believe that in these myths the existence of mankind in the present is described as depending in some way on the story of the origin of world and man. This means that in the first instance it is a question of the concern to secure and ensure that which is, namely, the world and man in it. It recognizes that the question of "how" man can continue to live and exist has prior concern over the intellectual question of the world's and man's beginning.

Correspondences and parallels between the Hebrew creation account of Gn 1:1-2:4 and the cosmogonies or Israel's earlier creation legends of the Ancient Near East (Lon-


This has been well summarized by R. Pettazoni, "Myths of Beginning and Creation-Myths," in Essays on the History of Religions (Supplements to Numen; Leiden, 1967), pp. 24-36; cf. C. Westermann, Genesis (Neukirchen- 'luyn, 1966 If.), pp. 28, 29. N. M. Sarna (Understanding Genesis, Schocken Book [New York, 1970], pp. 7-9), points out correctly that the so-called Babylonian Epic of Creation, Enema elfish, was annually reenacted at the Babylonian New Year festival. However, the "inextricable tie between myth and ritual, the mimetic enactment of the cosmogony in the fore: of ritual drama ... finds no counterpart in the Israelite cult" (p. 9).


C Westermann explained the complementary relationship between Gen. 1:1-2:4a and 2:4b-2d in the following way: "In Genesis 1 the question is, F3-om where does everything originate and how did it come about? In Genesis 2 the question is, Why is lean as he is?" The Genesis Accounts of Creation (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 24. Thus the complementary nature of the two creation accounts lies in the fact that Gn 1 is more concerned with the entirety of the creation of the World and Gn 2 more with the entirety of particular aspects of
and contemporary civilization in the ancient Near East have
to be approached with an open mind.\textsuperscript{13} The recognition of
correspondences and parallels raises the difficult question of
relationship and borrowing as well as the problem of evaluation.
N. M. Sarna, who wrote one of the most comprehensive recent
studies on the relationship between Gn and extra-biblical
sources bearing on it, states: "... to ignore subtle differences
[between Genesis and ancient Near Eastern parallels] is to
present an unbalanced and untrue perspective and to pervert
the scientific method."\textsuperscript{14} The importance of difference is, there-
fore, just as crucial as the importance of similarity. Both must
receive careful and studied attention in order to avoid a
misreading of elements of one culture in terms of another,
which produces gross distortion.\textsuperscript{15}

The method employed in this paper is to discuss the
similarities and differences of certain terms and motifs in the
Hebrew creation account of Gn 1 over against similar or
related terms and motifs in ancient Near Eastern cosmologies
with a view to discovering the relationship and distinction
between them. This procedure is aimed to reveal certain
aspects of the nature of the Hebrew creation account.

\begin{center}
\textit{Tehom--Tiamat}
\end{center}

Since the year 1895 many OT scholars have argued that
there is a definite relationship between the term \textit{tehom} (deep)
in Gn 1:2 and \textit{Tiamat}, the Babylonian female monster of the
primordial salt-water ocean in \textit{Enuma elish}.\textsuperscript{16} Some scholars

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{13}{Lambert, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 289, makes this point in reaction to\ earlier excesses by scholars who traced almost every OT idea to\ Babylonia.}
\footnotetext{14}{Sarna, \textit{off. cit.}, p. xxvii.}
\footnotetext{15}{See Kitchen, \textit{off. cit.}, pp. 87 ff.; Sarna, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. xxii ff.;\ Lambert, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 287 ff.}
\footnotetext{16}{This identification was made especially by H. Gunkel, \textit{Schopfung\ and Chaos in Urzeit and Endzeit} (Göttingen, 1895), pp. 29 ff.}
\end{footnotes}
to the present day claim that there is in Gn 1:2 an "echo of the old cosmogonic myth," while others deny it.

The question of a philological connection between the Babylonian *Tiamat* and the Biblical *tehom*, "deep," has its problems. A. Heidel has pointed out that the second radical of the Hebrew term *tehom*, i.e., the letter ה (h), in corresponding loan-words from Akkadian would have to be an נ (n) and that in addition, the Hebrew term would have to be feminine whereas it is masculine. If *Tiamat* had been taken over into Hebrew, it would have been left as it was or it would have been changed to ti'e'ama (תוֹמָא). Heidel has argued convincingly that both words go back to a common Semitic root from which also the Babylonian term *tiamtu*, *tamtu*, meaning "ocean, sea," is derived. Additional evidence for this has come from Ugarit where the word *thm/thmt*, meaning "ocean, deep, sea," has come to light, and from Arabic *Tihamatu* or

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20 Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 22, agrees that *tehom* is not feminine by grammatical form, but points out that "it is frequently employed with a feminine verb or adjective." See also the discussion by M. K. Wakeman, "God's Battle With the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery" (unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1969), pp. 143 ff.


Tihama which is the name for the low-lying Arabian coastal land. On this basis there is a growing consensus of opinion that the Biblical term tehom and the Babylonian Tiamat derive from a common Semitic root. This means that the use of the word of tehom in Gn 1:2 cannot be used as an argument for a direct dependence of Gn I on the Babylonian Enuma elish.

In contrast to the concept of the personified Tiamat, the mythical antagonist of the creator-god Marduk, the tehom in Gn 1:2 lacks any aspect of personification. It is clearly an inanimate part of the cosmos, simply a part of the created world. The "deep" does not offer any resistance to God's creative activity. In view of these observations it is unsustainable to speak of a "demythologizing" of a mythical being in Gn 1:2. The term tehom as used in vs. 2 does not suggest that there is present in this usage the remnant of a latent conflict between a chaos monster and a creator god.

The author of Gn 1 employs this term in a "depersonalized" and "non-mythical" way. Over against the Egyptian cosmogonic mythology contained in the Heliopolitan, Memphite, and Hermopolitan theologies, it is of significance that there is in Gn 1:2 neither a god rising out of tehom to proceed with creation nor does this term express the notion of a pre-
existent, personified Ocean (Nun). With T. H. Gaster it is to be observed that Gn 1:2 "nowhere implies...that all things actually issued out of water." In short, the description of the depersonalized, undifferentiated, unorganized, and passive state of tehom in Gn 1:2 is not due to any influence from non-Israelite mythology but is motivated through the Hebrew conception of the world. In stating the conditions in which this earth existed before God commanded that light should spring forth, the author of Gn 1 rejected explicitly contemporary mythological notions. He uses the term teh6m, whose cognates are deeply mythological in their usage in ancient Near Eastern creation speculations, in such a way that it is not only non-mythical in content but antimythical in purpose.

The Separation of Heaven and Earth

The idea of a separation of heaven and earth is present in all ancient Near Eastern mythologies. Sumerian mythology tells that the "earth had been separated from heaven" by Enlil, the air-god, while his father An "carried off the heaven." Babylonian mythology in Enuma elish reports the division of heaven and earth when the victorious god Marduk forms...


31 On the distinction between the Hebrew world-view and that of its neighbors, see Galling, op. cit., pp. 154, 155: Wurthwein, op. cit., p. 36; Stadelmann, op. cit., pp. 178 ff.


33 Kramer, History Begins at Sumer, p. 82.
heaven from the upper half of the slain Tiamat, the primeval salt-water ocean

IV: 138 He split her like a shellfish into two parts
139 Half of her he set up and ceiled it as sky.\textsuperscript{34}

From the remaining parts of Tiamat Marduk makes the earth and the deep.\textsuperscript{35} The Hittite Kumarbi myth, a version of a Hurrian myth, visualizes that heaven and earth were separated by a cutting tool:

When heaven and earth were built upon me [Upelluri, an Atlas figure] I knew nothing of it, and when they came and cut heaven and earth asunder with a copper tool, that also I knew not.\textsuperscript{36}

In Egyptian mythology Shu, the god of the air, is referred to as he who "raised Nut [the sky-goddess] above him, Geb [the earth-god] being at his feet."\textsuperscript{37} Thus heaven and earth were separated from an embrace by god Shu (or, in other versions, Ptah, Sokaris, Osiris, Khnum, and Upuwast of Assiut), "who raised heaven aloft to make the sky."\textsuperscript{38} In Phoenician mythology the separation is pictured as splitting the world egg.\textsuperscript{39}

The similarity between the Biblical account and mythology lies in the fact that both describe the creation of heaven and earth to be an act of separation.\textsuperscript{40} The similarity, however, does not seem to be as significant as the differences. In Gn 1 the firmament (or heaven) is raised simply by the fiat of God. In contrast to this, \textit{Enuma elish} and Egyptian mythology have water as the primal generating force, a notion utterly foreign to Gn creation.\textsuperscript{41} In Gn, God wills and the powerless, inani-

\textsuperscript{34} ANET\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{3}}, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{35} According too a newly discovered fragment of Tablet V. See Schmidt, op. cit., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{37} Coffin Texts (ed. de Buck), II, 78a, p. 19, as quoted by Brandon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 28. The date is the Middle Kingdom (2060-1788 B.c.).
\textsuperscript{38} Morenz, op. cit., pp. 180-182.
\textsuperscript{40} Westermann, Genesis, pp. 47 ff., 160 ff.
\textsuperscript{41} Sarna, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 13; Stadelmann, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 16.
mate, and inert waters obey. Furthermore, there is a notable difference with regard to how the "firmament" was fashioned and the material employed for that purpose, and how Marduk created in *Enuma elish*. The separation of waters in Gn is carried out in two steps: (1) There is a separation of waters on a horizontal level with waters above and below the firmament (expanse) (Gn 1:6-8); and (2) a separation of waters on the vertical level, namely the separation of waters below the firmament (expanse) in one place (ocean) to let the dry land (earth = ground) appear (Gn 1:9, 10).

These notable differences have led T. H. Gaster to suggest that "the writer [of Gn 1] has suppressed or expurgated older and cruder mythological fancies." But these differences are not so much due to suppressing or expurgating mythology. They rather indicate a radical break with the mythical cosmogony. We agree with C. Westermann that the Biblical author in explaining the creation of the firmament (expanse) "does not reflect in this act of creation the contemporary world-view, rather he overcomes it." Inherent in this presentation of the separation of heaven and earth is the same antimythical emphasis of the author of Gn 1 which we have already noted.

**Creation by Word**

It has been maintained that the concept of the creation of the world by means of the spoken word has a wide ancient Near Eastern background. It goes beyond the limits of this paper to cite every evidence for this idea.

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In *Enuma elish* Marduk was able by word of mouth to let a "cloth" vanish and restore it again.\(^{45}\) "A creation of the world by word, however, is not known in Mesopotamia."\(^{46}\) This situation is different in Egypt. From the period of Ptolemy IV (221-204 B.C.) comes a praise to the god Thoth: "Everything that is has come about through his word."\(^{47}\) In Memphite theology it is stated that Atum, the creator-god, was created by the speech of Ptah. The climax comes in the sentence

Indeed, all the divine order really came into being through what the heart thought and the tongue commanded.\(^{48}\)

The idea of creation by divine word is clearly apparent.\(^{49}\) This notion appears again. "... the Creator [Hike = magic itself] commanded, a venerable god, who speaks with his mouth..."\(^{50}\) G. F. Brandon points out that the notion of creation by word in Egyptian thought is to be understood that "creation was effected by magical utterance."\(^{51}\) Further-

\(^{45}\) ANET\(^3\), p. 66: IV: 19-26; Heidel, oohc cit., pp. 126 ff.
\(^{46}\) Schmidt, ohl. cit., p. 174. Kramer, History Begins at Sumer, pp. 79, 80, makes the point that the Near Eastern idea of the creative power of the divine word was a Sumerian development. "All that the creating deity had to do ... was to lad- his plans, utter the word, and pronounce a name" (p. 79). This he believes was an abstraction of the power of the command of the king.
\(^{48}\) ANET\(^3\), p. s.
\(^{49}\) Detailed discussions of the Egyptian idea of creation by divine word in relation to the OT idea of creation by divine word have been presented by K. Koch, "Wort und Einheit des Schopfergottes in Memphis and Jerusalem," ZThK, 62 (1965), 251-293, and Frame, *op. cit.*, pp. 2 ff. Koch claims that the OT idea of creation by divine word is derived from the Memphite cosmogony. But a direct dependence is to be rejected. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 56; Schmidt, oh. cit., p. 177. In Egypt creation comes by a magic word, an idea alien to Genesis creation.
\(^{50}\) Brandon, o/h. cit., p. 37, fromm a Coffin Text dated to 2240 u.c.
\(^{51}\) Ibid., p. 38.
more, creation by magical power of the spoken word is only one of many ways creation takes place in Egyptian mythology.\textsuperscript{52}

N. M. Sarna considers the similarity between the Egyptian notion of creation by word and the one in Gn 1 as "wholly superficial."\textsuperscript{53} In Egyptian thought the pronouncement of the right magical word, like the performance of the right magical action, is able to actualize the potentialities inherent in matter. The Gn concept of creation by divine fiat is not obscured by polytheistic and mantic-magic distortions.\textsuperscript{54} Gn 1 passes in absolute silence over the nature of matter upon which the divine word acted creatively. The constant phrase "and God said" (Gn 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26) with the concluding refrain "and it was so" (Gn 1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30) indicates that God's creative word does not refer to the utterance of a magic word, but to the expression of an effortless, omnipotent, unchallengeable word of a God who transcends the world. The author of Gn I thus shows here again his distance from mythical thought. The total concept of the creation by word in Gn I is unique in the ancient world. The writer of Gn I attacks the idea of creation by means of a magical utterance with the concept of a God who creates by an effortless word.\textsuperscript{55} It is his way of indicating that Israelite religion is liberated from the baneful influence of magic. But he also wishes to stress the essential difference of created being from divine

\textsuperscript{53} Sarna, op. cit., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{55} E. Hilgert, "References to Creation in the Old Testament other than in Genesis 1 and 2," in The Stature of Christ. Essays in Honor of E. Heppenstall, ed. by V. Carner and G. Stanhiser (Loma Linda, Calif., 1970), pp. 83-87, concludes that in Gn 1 there is a complete lack of a primeval dualism, i.e., a cosmic struggle from which a particular god emerged victorious. Yahweh is asserted always to have been the supreme omnipotent God. This is true also of other OT creation passages.
Being, i.e., in Gn 1 creation by word is to exclude any idea of emanationism, pantheism, and primeval dualism.

The Creation and Function of the Luminaries

Astral worship was supported in a variety of forms by the entire civilization of the ancient Near East, especially in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Among the Sumerians the moon as the major astral deity was born of Enlil and Ninlil, the air-god and air-goddess respectively. He was known as Nanna. Nanna, the moon-god, and his wife Ningal are the parents of Utu, the sun-god or the sun. In Egypt the sun in its varied appearances was the highest deity, so that in the course of time many gods acquired sun characteristics. On the other hand, the moon had an inferior role. The daily appearance of the sun was considered as its birth. The moon waned because it was the ailing eye of Horus, the falcon god. It goes without saying that both sun and moon as deities were worshiped. In Hittite religion the "first goddess of the country" was the sun-goddess Arinna, who was also the "chief deity of the Hittite pantheon." In Ugarit the deities of sun and moon are not as highly honored as other deities. One text asks that sacrifices be made to "the sun, the lady [= moon], and the stars." The great Baal myth has a number of references to the sun-goddess who seeks Baal. A separate hymn celebrates the marriage of the moon-god Yarih, "the One Lighting Up Heaven," with the goddess Nikkal.

In Enuma elish one could speak of a creation of the moon only if one understands the expression "caused to shine" as indicating the creation of the moon. It is to be noted that

56 Kramer, Sumerian Mythology, p. 41.
58 Schmidt, op. cit., p. 117.
59 Text 52 (= SS), 54.
60 Text 62 (= IAB); 49 (= IIIAB).
61 Text 77 (= NK).
62 ANET³, p. 68.
the order of the heavenly bodies in *Enuma elish* is stars-sun-moon.\(^63\) The stars are undoubtedly referred to first because of the astral worship accorded them in Babylonia and "because of the great significance of the stars in the lives of the astronomically and astrologically minded Babylonians."\(^64\) The stars are not reported to have been created; the work of Marduk consists singularly in founding stations for the "great gods ... the stars" (Tablet V: 1-2).\(^65\) There is likewise no mention of the creation of the sun.

Against this background the contrast between the Biblical and the non-Biblical ideas on sun, moon, and stars becomes apparent. "Indeed," says W. H. Schmidt, "there comes to expression here [in Gn 1:14-18] in a number of ways a polemic against astral religion."\(^66\)

1. In the Biblical presentation everything that is created, whatever it may be, cannot be more than creature, i.e., creatureliness remains the fundamental and determining characteristic of all creation. In *Enuma elish* Marduk fixes the astral likenesses of the gods as constellations (Tablet V:2), for the gods cannot be separated from the stars and constellations which represent them.

2. In the place of an expressly mythical rulership of the star Jupiter over the other stars of astral deities in *Enuma elish*, we find in Gn the rulership of a limited part of creation, namely day and night through the sun and the moon, both of which are themselves created objects made by God.

3. The heavenly bodies in the Biblical creation narrative are not "from eternity" as the Hittite Karatepe texts claim for the sun-god.\(^67\) The heavenly bodies do have a beginning; they are created and are neither independent nor autonomous.

4. The author of the Biblical creation story in Gn 1 avoids

\(^{63}\) Not as Heidel, off. cit., p. 117, says, "stars, moon, sun."

\(^{64}\) Ibid.

\(^{65}\) ANET\(^3\), p. 68.


\(^{67}\) Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
the names "sun" and "moon," which are among Israel's neighbors designations for deities. A conscious opposition to ancient Near Eastern astral worship is apparent, for the common Semitic word for "sun" was also a divine name.\(^{68}\)

(5) The heavenly bodies appear in Gn 1 in the "degrading"\(^{69}\) status of "luminaries" whose function it is to "rule." They have a serving function and are not the light itself. As carriers of light they merely are "to give light" (Gn 1:15-18).

(6) The Biblical narrative hardly mentions the stars. The Hebrew phrase "and the stars" is a seemingly parenthetical addition to the general emphasis on the greater and smaller luminaries. In view of star worship so prevalent in Mesopotamia,\(^{70}\) it appears that the writer intended to emphasize that the stars themselves are created things and nothing more. An autonomous divine quality of the stars is thus denied. They are neither more nor less than all the other created things, i.e., they share completely in the creatureliness of creation. With von Rad and others we may conclude that "the entire passage vs. 14-19 breathes a strongly antimythical pathos"\(^{71}\) or polemic. Living in the world of his day, the writer of Gn 1 was undoubtedly well acquainted with pagan astral worship, as were the readers for whom he wrote. The Hebrew account of the creation, function, and limitation of the luminaries demonstrates that he did not borrow his unique thoughts from

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\(^{68}\) Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 ff.

\(^{69}\) Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 53.


the prevailing pagan mythical views. Rather he combats them while, at the same time, he portrays his own picture of the creatureliness of the luminaries and of their limitations.

### The Purpose of Man's Creation

We need to discuss also the matter of the purpose of man's creation in Sumero-Akkadian mythology and in Gn 1. The recently published Atrahasis Epic,\(^72\) which parallels Gn 1-9 in the sequence of Creation-Rebellion-Man's Achievements-Flood,\(^73\) is concerned exclusively with the story of man and his relationship with the gods.\(^74\) It should be noted, however, that this oldest Old Babylonian epic\(^75\) does not open with an account of the creation of the world. Rather its opening describes the situation when the world had been divided among the three major deities of the Sumerian-Akkadian pantheon. The seven senior-gods (Anunnaki) were making the junior-gods (Igigi) suffer with physical work.

I : i : 3-4 The toil of the gods was great,
The work was heavy, the distress was much--\(^76\)

The work was indeed so much for the junior-gods that they decided to strike and depose their taskmaster, Enlil. When Enlil learned of this he decided to counsel with his senior-god colleagues upon a means to appease the rebel-gods. Finally, the senior-gods in council decided to make a substitute to do the work:

"Let man carry the toil of the gods."\(^77\)

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74 Ibid., p. 6. Note now also, the article by W. L. Moran, "The Creation of Man in Atrahasis I 192-248," BASOR, 200 (1970), 48-56, who deals with the origins and nature of man in Atrahasis.
75 In its present form it dates to ca. 1635 s.c.; see Lambert-Millard, op. cit., p. 6.
76 Ibid., p. 43.
77 Ibid., p. 57.
In *Enuma elish* the gods were also liberated from work by the creation of man.\textsuperscript{78} The idea that man was created for the purpose of relieving the gods of hard labor by supplying them with food and drink was standard among the Babylonians.\textsuperscript{79} This motif may derive from Sumerian prototypes. In the Sumerian myth *Enki and Ninmah* we also find that man is created for the purpose of freeing the gods from laboring for their sustenance.\textsuperscript{80}

The description of the creation of man in Gn 1:26-28 has one thing in common with Mesopotamian mythology, namely, that in both instances man has been created for a certain purpose. Yet this very similarity between Gn 1 and pagan mythology affords us an excellent example of the superficiality of parallels if a single feature is torn from its cultural and contextual moorings and treated independently. T. H. Gaster makes the following significant statement

> But when it comes to defining the purpose of man's creation, he [the scriptural writer] makes a supremely significant advance upon the time-honored pagan view. In contrast to the doctrine enunciated in the Mesopotamian myths. ... , man is here represented, not as the menial of the gods, but as the ruler of the animal and vegetable kingdoms (1:28) ... \textsuperscript{81}

In Gn 1 "man is the pinnacle of creation," to use the words of N. M. Sarna.\textsuperscript{82} On the other hand, in Mesopotamian mythology the creation of man is almost incidental, presented as a kind of afterthought, where he is a menial of the gods to provide them with nourishment and to satisfy their physical needs. The author of Gn 1 presents an antithetical view. The very first communication between God and man comes in the form of a divine blessing

\textsuperscript{78} Tablet IV: 107-121, 127; V:147, 148; VI:152, 153; VII 27-29; ANET\textsuperscript{3}, pp. 66-70.
\textsuperscript{79} For other Babylonian texts which contain this idea, see Heidel, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-63, 65, 66.
\textsuperscript{80} Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, pp. 69, 70.
\textsuperscript{81} Gaster, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, I, 704.
\textsuperscript{82} Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth (1:28 NEB).

This is followed by the pronouncement that all seed-bearing plants and fruit trees "shall be yours for food" (1:29 NEB). This expresses divine care and concern for man's physical needs and well-being in antithesis to man's purpose to care for the needs and well-being of the gods in Mesopotamian mythology. In stressing the uniqueness of the purpose of man's creation the Biblical writer has subtly and effectively succeeded, not just in combatting pagan mythological notions, but also in conveying at the same time the human-centered orientation of Gn 1 and the sense of man's glory and freedom to rule the earth for his own needs.

The Order of Creation

There is general agreement that there is a certain correspondence between the order of creation in Enuma elish and Gn 1. In Gn 1 the order is light, firmament, seas and dry land with vegetation, luminaries, animal life in sea and sky, animal life on earth, and man. A comparison with Enuma elish indicates certain analogies in the order of creation: firmament, dry land, luminaries, and lastly man. These orders of creation certainly resemble each other in a remarkable way. But there are some rather significant differences which have been too often overlooked. (1) There is no explicit statement in Enuma elish that light was created before the creation of luminaries. Although scholars have in the past maintained that Enuma elish has the notion of light before the creation of the heavenly luminaries, such a view is based on dubious interpretations of certain phenomena. (2) There is no explicit reference
in *Enuma elish* to the creation of the sun. To infer this from Marduk's character as a solar deity and from what is said about the creation of the moon in Tablet V is too precarious.\(^{85}\)

(3) Missing also in *Enuma elish* is the creation of vegetation, although Marduk is known to be the "creator of grains and herbs."\(^{86}\) Even if the creation of vegetation were mentioned in the missing lines of Tablet V, its appearance would have been after the luminaries whereas in Gn it is before the luminaries.\(^{87}\)

(4) Finally, *Enuma elish* knows nothing of the creation of any animal life in sea and sky or on earth.\(^{88}\)

A comparison of creative processes and their order indicates the following: (1) Gn 1 outlines twice as many processes of creation as *Enuma elish*; and (2) there is only a general analogy between the order of creation in both accounts; it is not identical.\(^{89}\)

We can turn only briefly to the question of dependence.\(^{90}\) Against the view of earlier scholars, A. Heidel, C. F. Whitley, J. Albertson, and others\(^{91}\) seem to be correct in pointing out that the general analogy between both stories does not suggest a direct borrowing on the part of Gn 1 from *Enuma elish*. It is not inconceivable that the general analogy in the order of creation, which is far from being identical, may be accounted

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\(^{86}\) Tablet VII:2; ANET\(^3\), p. 70.

\(^{87}\) Whitley, op. cit., p. 34.

\(^{88}\) Heidel, op. cit., pp. 117 f., has given reasons for doubting that the missing lines of Tablet V could have contained an account of the creation of vegetation, of animals, birds, reptiles, and fishes. His doubts have since been justified; see B. Landsberger and J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "The Fifth Tablet of Enurna Elis," *JNES*, XX (1961), 154-179.

\(^{89}\) Whitley, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 35, is correct in concluding that "there is no close parallel in the sequence of the creation of elements common to both cosmogonies."

\(^{90}\) For a recent discussion on the various views with regard to the question of dependence, see Albertson, op. cit., pp. 233-239.

\(^{91}\) Heidel, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-139; Whitley, *op. cit.*, p. 38; Albertson, *op. cit.*, p. 239; Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 13; etc.
for on the basis of the assumption that both stories may have sprung from a common tradition of remote origin in the pre-patriarchal period when the Hebrew ancestors dwelt in Mesopotamia.  

As a matter of fact, a comparison of the general thrust of Enuma elish and Gn 1 makes the sublime and unique character of the latter stand out in even bolder relief. The battle myth which is a key motif in Enuma elish is completely absent in Gn 1. J. Hempel seems to be correct when he points out that it was the "conscious intent" of the author of Gn 1 to destroy the myth's theogony by his statement that it was the God of Israel who created heaven and earth. Along the same line W. Eichrodt sees in the use of the name Elohim in Gn 1 a tool to assist Israel to clarify her concepts of God against pagan polytheistic theogony. E. Wurthwein suggests that the placing of the creation accounts in Gn at the beginning of a linear history emphasizes a contrast to the cyclical nature of mythology, which is especially significant in view of the fact that creation in Gn 1 comes to a close within a certain non-repeatable period of creative time that closed with the seventh day. In his view this should be understood as a polemic which marks off, defends, and delimits against such mythical speculations that maintain a constantly repeating re-enactment of creation. Furthermore, it should not go unnoticed that the creation of the tanninim, "sea monsters," in Gn 1:21 reflects a deliberate effort to contradict the notion of creation in terms of a struggle, which is a key motif in the battle myth of pagan cosmogony. It also puts emphasis upon the creatureliness of

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92 This view has been held in some form or other by, among others, Ira M. Price, The Monuments and the Old Testament (Philadelphia, 1925), pp. 129 f.; Heidel, op. cit., p. 139; Albertson, op. cit., p. 239.


95 Wurthwein, op. cit., p. 35.
the *tanninim* as being identical to that of other created animals.  

Our examination of crucial terms and motifs in the cosmology of Gn 1 in comparison with ancient Near Eastern analogues indicates that the author of Gn 1 exhibits in a number of critical instances a sharply antmythical polemic. With a great many safeguards he employs certain terms and motifs, partly taken from his ideologically incompatible predecessors and partly chosen in contrast to comparable concepts in ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, and fills them in his own usage with new meaning consonant with his aim and world-view. Gn cosmology as presented in Gn 1:1-2:4a appears thus basically different from the mythological cosmologies of the ancient Near East. It represents not only a "complete break" with the ancient Near Eastern mythological cosmologies but represents a parting of the spiritual ways which meant an undermining of the prevailing mythological cosmologies. This was brought about by the conscious and deliberate antmythical polemic that runs as a red thread through the entire Gn cosmology. The antmythical polemic has its roots in the Hebrew understanding of reality which is fundamentally opposed to the mythological one.

96 For a detailed discussion, see the writer's forthcoming essay, *supra*, n. 26.

97 So Sarna, *op. cit.*, pp. 8 ff., who points out that the Genesis creation account in its "non-political," "non-cultic," and "non-mythological" nature and function "represents a complete break with Near Eastern tradition" (p. 9). Independent of the former, Payne, *off. cit.*, p. 29, maintains that "the biblical account is theologically not only far different from, but totally opposed to, the ancient Near Eastern myths."

98 Childs, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 ff., speaks of the "concept of the world as present in Genesis z" being in "conflict with the myth" (p. 39). "The Priestly writer has broken the myth ... " (p. 43). However, he also claims that the Biblical writer "did not fully destroy the myth," but "reshaped" and "assimilated" it in a stage of "demythologization" (pp. 42, 43). Later he concludes that "Israel succeeded in overcoming myth because of an understanding of reality which opposed the mythical" (p. 97). However, myth was "overcome" already in Gn 1 and not merely "broken" there.
THE GENEALOGIES OF GEN 5 AND 11 AND THEIR ALLEGED BABYLONIAN BACKGROUND

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With the discovery in the early 1870's of the Babylonian flood account, which was recognized to be closely related to the flood story in Genesis,¹ there was opened a new chapter of comparative studies relating the various aspects of the book of Genesis to materials uncovered from ancient Near Eastern civilizations. Attention was drawn to the report of the Babylonian priest Berossos concerning ten antediluvian kings who ruled for vast periods of time.² H. Gunkel, among others, considered this as a background for the ten antediluvian patriarchs of Gen 5. In the year 1901 he suggested agreement between Gen 5 and the report of Berossos in the following four major areas: (1) the time before the flood, (2) the number "ten," (3) the large numbers, and (4) the correspondence of names (Nos. 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 in the enumeration of Berossos).³ At about the same time the well-known Assyriologist H. Zimmern concluded, "It can hardly be doubted that the Biblical tradition of Gen 5 (P) concerning the antediluvian patriarchs is basically identical with the Babylonian tradition about ten antediluvian primeval kings."⁴ These views became dominant and in the course of time, upon the publication of the Sumerian King List, were applied to the genealogies of

¹ On Dec. 3, 1872, G. Smith read a paper to the Society of Biblical Archaeology on the Babylonian flood story which was printed in the Transaction of the Society in 1873.


³ H. Gunkel, Genesis (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1901), pp. 121-123.

both Gen 5 and 11.⁵ E. A. Speiser's commentary, which is particularly noted for sensitivity in the relationship to ancient Near Eastern backgrounds, suggests that the biblical genealogies are dependent upon a Mesopotamian source.⁶

1. New Ancient Near Eastern Data

The year 1923 was the beginning of a new era as regards the alleged Babylonian background of Gen 5 and 11, because S. Langdon published in that year the first cuneiform text of what is now known as the Sumerian King List.⁷ About a decade and a half later T. Jacobsen produced the standard publication, entitled The Sumerian King List (1939).⁸ These cuneiform materials surprisingly supported much of the information known from Berossos but at the same time brought about significant corrections.

Since 1952 a steady stream of additional texts and fragments of the Sumerian King List has come to light and seen publication.⁹


⁶ E. A. Speiser, Genesis, AB, p. 41.


The Sumerian King List is now available in more than one version, with significant differences in the sequence of cities and of kings and their lengths of reign. These facts have made it evident that a "canonical" form of the Sumerian King List was never in existence. Such texts as the genealogy of Hammurapi and the rulers of Lagas, the Assyrian and Babylonian King Lists, and cuneiform chronicles throw new light on the respective literary genres and the relationship of the biblical genealogies to their ancient Near Eastern analogues.

2. Comparison of Gen 5 and 11 with the Sumerian King List

The new set of cuneiform data relating to the Sumerian King List and the information given by Berossos provide new insights into the alleged Babylonian background of the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11. There remains a formal similarity between the


genealogies in Gen 5 and 11 and the Sumerian King List in terms of listings\textsuperscript{14} divided by a flood. The listings of antediluvian and postdiluvian rulers in the major recension of the Sumerian King List are separated by but one sentence: "The Flood swept theretover [the earth]."\textsuperscript{15} The genealogies in Gen 5 and 11 are also separated, but by extensive and various materials: (1) the marriage of the sons of God with the daughters of men (6:1-4), (2) an intricate story of the flood (6:5-9:7), (3) the universal covenant (9:8-17), (4) the Table of Nations (10:1-32), and (5) the story of the tower of Babel (11:1-9).

There are a number of significant areas where comparison may be made between the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 and the Sumerian King List from Old Babylonian times. It is helpful and revealing to develop these areas as follows

1. \textit{Semitic Names versus Sumerian Names}. The claim of the correspondence of the names between the listings by Berossos and Gen 5 could not be sustained with the discovery of cuneiform materials relating to the listing of Berossos. H. Zimmern himself acknowledged that "the beautiful combinations (with the names in Gen 5) ... have come to a merciless end."\textsuperscript{16} The names turned out to be Sumerian instead of Semitic. J. J. Finkelstein has recently noted, "Certainly, the earlier attempts to harmonize the Biblical and Mesopotamian names proved utterly futile."\textsuperscript{17} The reason for this radical change from the early position of Gunkel and others rests in the fact that no less than six different cuneiform versions are now at hand for comparative purposes on the basis of which the Greek version of Berossos could be reassessed.

Research into the origin of the Sumerian King List has led to the conclusion that the list of kings before the flood and the list of kings after the flood, were originally separate.
\textsuperscript{17} Finkelstein, "The Antediluvian Kings," p. 50, n. 41.
All of these versions agree on the Sumerian origin of the names and the distance from those in Gen 5 and 11.

2. Longevity versus Reigns. C. Westermann noted correctly that among the differences between Gen 5 (and 11) and the Sumerian King List is that the former provides the numbers in terms of "years of life" whereas the latter gives the numbers in terms of "years of reign." The distinction between longevity and rulership is an important one. Each has its own independent functions in the context in which it appears.

3. Line of Descent versus Succession of Kings. Gen 5 follows the standard line of descent formula, "When PN₁ had lived x years, he became father of PN₂. Then PN₁ lived y years after he became the father of PN₂ and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of PN₁ were z years, and he died." Gen 11 employs the same line of descent formula with the exception of the last sentence. At times additional information is inserted in Gen 5 and 11. Both Gen 5 and 11 have "a descending type of genealogy" in which the generations are traced in a supposedly unbroken line of descent from the first person mentioned to the last one. The Sumerian King List, on the other hand, lists kings and seeks to trace a succession of them in various cities. The flexible pattern employed is as follows: "In CN, RN₁, ruled x years, RN₂, ruled x years, RN₃ ruled x years, x king(s) ruled y years." One antediluvian section concludes: "There are x (5) cities, x (8) kings ruled x (241,200) years. Then the flood swept thereover." The succession of kings with their reigns differs radically from the line of descent genealogy in Gen 5 and 11, which is totally unconcerned and uninterested in kings, dynasties, and cities.

4. Lengths of Life versus Lengths of Reign. The relatively high figures of life-spans of Gen 5 which nevertheless do not ever

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exceed a single millennium "turn out to be exceptionally moderate by comparison" with the Sumerian King List where the respective lengths of reigns of the kings run from 18,600 years for king Ubartutu (WB 444) to 72,000 for kings Alalgar, kidunnu, and Enmenduranna. In many instances there are great divergencies regarding the lengths of reigns and the number of kings in the respective witnesses to the Old Babylonian tradition. The following comparison may be helpful:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WB 444</th>
<th>WB. 62</th>
<th>UCBC 9-1x19</th>
<th>BEROSSOS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alulim</td>
<td>Alulim 67,200</td>
<td>Alulim 36,000</td>
<td>Aloros 36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alalgar</td>
<td>Alalgar 72,000</td>
<td>Alalgar 10,800</td>
<td>Alaparos 10,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entnenuanna</td>
<td>... kidunnu72,000</td>
<td>Ammeluanna 36,000</td>
<td>Amelon 46,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enmengalanna</td>
<td>.. alinuna 21,600</td>
<td>En sipazianna 13,200</td>
<td>Amenon 43,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumuzi</td>
<td>Dumuzi 26,800</td>
<td>Dumuzi 36,000</td>
<td>Megalaros 64,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensipazianna</td>
<td>Enmendurauna21,600</td>
<td>Enmeduranki 6,000</td>
<td>Daonos 36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enmendurunki</td>
<td>Ensipaizianna 36,000</td>
<td>Ubartutu ?</td>
<td>Eudorachos 64,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ubarututu</td>
<td>Enmenduranna 72,000 [Ziusudra?] 16,000+</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amempsinos 36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suruppak 28,800</td>
<td></td>
<td>Otiartes 28,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ziusudra 36,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Xisuthros 64,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One notices the striking differences in total years of reigns in some texts. The total years are exceeded by 200,000 in some recensions. Of course, these fabulous lengths of reigns are not trustworthy. It has been thought that there has been use of some kind of scheme built on the Sumerian duodecimal system, where all figures can be divided by 1 SAR = 3,600 (60 x 60) or through a sixth of it (600), or other systems. In view of this, "It would seem fair to conclude that no significance at all is to be

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20 Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 42.
21 *ANET*, p. 265.
25 *RTAT*, p. 113, n. 107.
attributed to the total number of years given for the entire antediluvian period in the different texts [of the Sumerian King List].”

5. Ten Antediluvian Ancestors versus Seven-to-Ten Kings. As recently as 1965 the Assyriologist W. G. Lambert pointed to the number of "ten long-lived patriarchs from Adam to Noah" that span the time to the flood as a point of borrowing on the part of the Hebrews from Mesopotamia. However, the major recension of the Sumerian King List (WB 444) contains only eight and not ten kings. One text contains only seven kings (W) and another (UCBC 9-1819) either seven or eight, whereas a bilingual fragment from Ashurbanipal's library has but nine kings. Berossos and only one ancient tablet (WB 62), i.e. only two texts (of which only one is a cuneiform document), give a total of ten antediluvian kings. On the basis of the cuneiform data it can no longer be suggested that the Sumerian King List contained originally ten antediluvian kings after which the biblical genealogies were patterned. In addition, the supposedly unbroken line of descent in Gen 5 is in stark contrast to the concurrent or contemporaneous dynasties of the Sumerian King List. We must also note that Gen 11 lists ten postdiluvians from Shem to Abraham whereas the Sumerian King List enumerates thirty-nine kings.

6. Tracing of Ancestors versus Unification of the Land. The basic ideology of Gen 5 and 11 appears to be to trace the ancestors in a supposedly unbroken line of descent (i.e. linear genealogy) from the first man (Adam) at creation to the last man (Noah)

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28 Jacobsen, Sumerian King List, p. 77; ANET, p. 265; RTAT, p. 114.
before the flood (Gen 5) and from one son of the flood hero (Shem) to the first Hebrew patriarch (Abraham) (Gen 11). There is a radical difference between this and the basic ideology of the Sumerian King List. Various scholars have pointed out that the latter's ideology is built upon the principle of "a widely accepted political idea which cherished the concept of long-continued unification of the land." W. W. Hallo has pointed out that the Sumerian King List is "a political tract, designed to perpetuate the perfectly transparent fiction that Sumer and Akkad had, since the Flood, been united under the rule of a single king, albeit that king might come at any given time from any one of eleven different cities." There is not the slightest hint in either Gen 5 or 11 that it shares with the Sumerian King List a political ideology or ideal. The Mesopotamian texts have a purpose totally different from that of the supposed biblical counterparts.

7. Genealogy versus King List. Gen 5 and 11 are commonly recognized as belonging to the type of literature designated by the term "genealogy." A "genealogy" in the Bible consists of a list of names indicating the ancestors or descendants of a person or persons by tracing lineage through an ascending scale (individual to ancestor) or a descending one (ancestor to individual). It has been noted correctly that the Sumerian King List is not a genealogy at all. Indeed, "The decisive difference lies in the fact that both texts [Gen 5 and the Sumerian King List] belong to a different genre: Gen 5 is a genealogy, the Old Babylonian [Sumerian] King List is a presentation of the sequence of dynasties of a series of cities with the sequence of their kings and their spans of reigns." It is an undisputed fact that none of the six currently known recensions of the Sumerian King List

33 Hartman, "Sumerian King List and Genesis 5 and 11B," p. 27.
34 W. W. Hallo, "Royal Hymns and Mesopotamian Unity," *JCS* 17 (1963): 112.
37 Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 472.
contains any genealogical notices at all for the antediluvian period, and in the postdiluvian period such notices are sporadic and limited to two generations only. The Sumerian King List is a "political tract" of the "king list" genre, but Gen 5 and 11 belong to the "genealogy" genre. Both of these genres are distinguished also in cuneiform literature.

8. History of Mankind versus History of a People. The genealogy of Gen 5 has the repeated clause "and he had other sons and daughters." This, along with other indicators, seeks to express the growth of mankind from generation to generation. It also emphasizes the spread of mankind from Adam to Noah. Essentially the same emphasis is evident in the Table of Nations (Gen 10), which presents a remarkably accurate picture of the origin and interrelationship of the various races along the line of complementary criteria of classification. The universal or worldwide outlook is a typical feature of the whole of Gen 1-11, as is customarily acknowledged.

The Sumerian King List, on the other hand, not only lacks this universal emphasis concerning the growth and spread of mankind, but it is in particular, and by design, geared as a political document which emphasizes that the dynasty of Isin is the successor of all the previous dynasties. Its primary concern is with "kingship" in various cities. From the time that "kingship" was

38 The brief genealogical notices (A NET, pp. 265-266) consist of a two-generation genealogy in the form of "RN₁ son of RN₂, ruled x years." In no instance is there a statement linking more than one ruler to the next in a simple "father-son" relationship. Cf. Wilson, Genealogy and History, pp. 92-101.
39 Hallo, "Royal Hymns," p. 112.
41 Gen 5:4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 26, 30; 11:11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25.
42 Westermann, Genesis, p. 472.
"lowered from heaven," it resided in various cities until it came to rest in Isin. The Sumerian King List is tendentious. It seeks to prove that "kingship" belongs to Sumer and nowhere else. In this sense the Sumerian King List is a local history which seeks to legitimize the primacy of the kingdom of Isin over rival kingdoms.

9. Beginning with Creation versus Beginning with the Lowering of Kingship from Heaven. The genealogy of Gen 5 makes a distinct point of tracing mankind from the point of the creation onward. This is particularly emphasized through the usage of the temporal clause, "When God created man" (5:1) and the identification of Adam as the father of Seth (5:3). After dealing first with the creation of man, the author of Gen 5 traces a continuous genealogical chain from Adam to Noah. The idea appears to be to emphasize the continuity of the line directly created by God, "in his image" (5:1), down to Noah, the "righteous" man (6:9) who survives the flood and through whom the human race is preserved for the world.

The Sumerian King List, to the contrary, knows nothing of a creation of man. It traces "kingship" from the time it descended from heaven. Its beginning reads: "When kingship was lowered from heaven, kingship was (first) in Eridu." For the period after the flood had come, the narrative continues as follows: "After the Flood had swept over (the earth) (and) when kingship was lowered (again) from heaven, kingship was (first) in Kish." Both of these sentences may actually be beginnings of separate entities which were later joined into the presently

46 Jacobsen, Sumerian King List, pp. 140-141.
47 ANET, p. 265; RTAT, p. 113.
49 It is presently debated whether the Old Babylonian version of the post-diluvian King List began originally with i.43: "In Kish, Ga[. . .] ur . . ." (so Jacobsen. Sumerian King List, pp. 6-1, 77) or with i.41: "When kingship was lowered (again) from heaven" (so Hallo, "Beginning and End," pp. 56-57) or with i.40: "After the flood had swept over (the earth) (and) when kingship was . . ." (so Lambert and Millard, Atra-hasis, p. 25) on the basis of the
known Sumerian King List.\textsuperscript{50} The lowering of "kingship" from heaven was not coincident with the initial creation in Mesopotamian tradition,\textsuperscript{51} so that it can be concluded that the Sumerian King List, in contrast to Gen 5, was not intended to make a statement anywhere in terms of an absolute beginning of man. It merely traces kingship from the beginning of civilization.\textsuperscript{52}

10. \textit{Concluding with the Man Noah versus Concluding with the City of Suruppak}. The genealogy of Gen 5 terminates with the man Noah (vss. 28-29, 32), who becomes the hero of the flood (Gen 6:5-9:7). As pointed out already, there is no mention of cities or of kingship. The Old Babylonian tradition of the antediluvian period was never fixed in "canonical" form,\textsuperscript{53} because the sequence and number of kings and cities differ in the cuneiform texts. There is, however, a uniform consensus in all available cuneiform texts regarding the last antediluvian city, namely the city of Suruppak,\textsuperscript{54} in which kingship last resided before the flood. In contrast to the cuneiform texts, Berossos has the city of Larak as his third and last city.\textsuperscript{55} Berossos also has Xisuthros genealogy of the rulers of Lagas (Sollberger, "The Rulers of Lagas," pp. 280-290) which begins with what is i.40 in the Sumerian King List.\textsuperscript{50} Jacobsen, \textit{Sumerian King List}, pp. 55-68; Kraus, "Liste der alten Konige," pp. 31, 51; Rowton, "Date of the Sumerian King List," pp. 161-162; Finkelstein, "Antediluvian Kings," pp. 44-45; Hallo, "Beginning and End," pp. 52-57; Nissen, "Fine neue Version," pp. 1-5; Hartman, "Sumerian King List and Gen 5 and 11B," p. 27.

\textsuperscript{51} This is argued effectively on the basis of the Etana epic (\textit{ANET}, p. 114) by Hartman, "Sumerian King List and Gen 5 and 11B," p. 27.

\textsuperscript{52} Lambert, "The Babylonian Background of Genesis," p. 299: "The Sumero-Babylonian tradition is of a line of kings from the founding of civilization to the flood, not of a line of patriarchs . . . from creation onward."

\textsuperscript{53} Finkelstein, "Antediluvian Kings," pp. 45-49.

\textsuperscript{54} Note the sequence and last city in the following texts:

WB 444 has Eridu, Bad-Tibira, Larak, Sippar, Suruppak.

WB 62 has Eridu (?), Larsa, Bad-Tibira, Larak, Sippar, Suruppak

UCBC 9-1819 has Eridu, Bad-Tibira, Sippar, Suruppak

CT 46:5 has [Eridu?], Bad-Tibira, Sippar, Larak, Suruppak

Ni 3195 has [Eridu], Larak, [Bad-Tibira], rest lost

\textsuperscript{55} Berossos has the sequence Babylon, Bad-Tibira, and Larak. The absence of Sippar and Suruppak from Berossos' account has been variously explained. See Jacobsen, \textit{Sumerian King List}, pp. 74-75, nn. 24, 27, 31; Finkelstein, "Antediluvian Kings," pp. 46-47.
Ziusudra) as the last king of Larak, whereas the flood hero Ziusudra of the Sumerian flood story\textsuperscript{56} is the last antediluvian king of Suruppak in only one complete cuneiform text (WB 62).\textsuperscript{57} The other complete cuneiform text (WB 444) has Ubartutu as the last king of Suruppak. Ubartutu never figures as a flood hero. In view of these divergences it is evident that the cuneiform consensus places emphasis on the last antediluvian city of Suruppak but is ambiguous regarding the last antediluvian king--who may be the flood hero (so Ziusudra), or who may not be the flood hero (so Ubartutu).\textsuperscript{58}

What counts in the various recensions of the Sumerian King List is the "kingship" that continues to reside in various cities down to Suruppak; what counts in the genealogy of Gen 5 is the personal lineage which continues in a supposedly unbroken chain of antediluvian descendants from Adam down to Noah, the flood hero. It is once more apparent that the ideology, function, and purpose of the Hebrew and Sumerian documents are quite different. The end of the genealogy of Gen 5 is as different from that of the Sumerian King List as is the beginning of the former from that of the latter.

3. Conclusion

This comparison of the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 with the several newly discovered versions of the Sumerian King List appears to demonstrate that aside from the "superficial similarity"\textsuperscript{59} of the sequence of listing-flood-listing, which is a later


\textsuperscript{57} For discussions of this problem, see Jacobsen, Sumerian King List, p. 76, n. 34; Finkelstein, "Antediluvian Kings," pp. 47-49.

\textsuperscript{58} Unfortunately, two cuneiform texts (UCBC 9-1819 and Ni 3195) are broken at the crucial point and do not help to fill in information on the last king and last city. It is a striking fact that in y-VB .111 Ziusudra is deliberately omitted from the dynasty of Suruppak, as is clear from the summary provided at the end of the antediluvian section of this tablet. See Jacobsen, Sumerian King List, p. 77; Finkelstein, "Antediluvian Kings," p. 47.

\textsuperscript{59} Hartman, "The Sumerian King List and Gen 5 and 11B," pp. 32.
construct in the Sumerian King List and which is in itself different in Gen 5-11, there is a complete lack of agreement and relationship. This is manifested through a comparison of names, longevity and reigns, line of descent and royal succession, number of antediluvians, chronographic information, ideology, genre, historical emphasis, and the beginning and end of the respective documents.

The rich current cuneiform data significantly facilitate the precision of the evaluation of the relationship between the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11 and the traditions of the Sumerian King List. On the basis of limited cuneiform data, A. Deimel wrote over five decades ago that "it may be better to admit honestly, that until now there is no evidence for any connection of any kind between the Babylonian and Biblical traditions regarding the antediluvian forefathers." 60 Recent cuneiform finds have led to a reinvestigation of the ideology of the Hebrew and Sumerian traditions, causing T. C. Hartman to conclude that the Sumerian materials relating to the king list cannot have been a source for the genealogies of Gen 5 and 11. 61 My above investigation of additional aspects and essential details appears to show that the Hebrew genealogical picture of Gen 5 and 11 is totally devoid of any influence from the currently available data relating to the Sumerian King List. 62 It is not only evident that the structure,

61 Hartman, "The Sumerian King List and Gen 5 and 1113," p. 32. W. F. Albright's suggestion (Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan [Garden City: Doubleday, 1968], p. 98) that "the variations in numbers and ages prove some sort of connexion-though not through written tradition" is in need of revision in view of the materials now available. Aside from the material published by Jacobsen, Sumerian King List, Albright was apparently aware of only the text W 20030 7 published by van Dijk (p. 98, n. 118).
62 In view of this, the popular Babylonian influence on Gen 5 "in establishing a line of succession" and "a list of names with extraordinary numbers for the antediluvian period," as suggested still by Johnson (The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies, pp. 30-31), as well as with regard to "the ten antediluvian figures" and the "long life spans of these figures" as also mentioned by Wilson (Genealogy and History, p. 201), calls for revision.
purpose, and function of the Hebrew and Sumerian documents are different, but the new data of ancient Near Eastern literature seem to indicate that they belong to different types of literature, each of which has its own matrix and serves its own aims.

63 Supra, nn. 10-11.

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Like other parts of Scripture, Genesis 1 must be interpreted in terms of its historical and literary context. This creation account was given to the Israelites in the wilderness, after the exodus from Egypt but before the conquest of Canaan. What the message meant then to the original hearers must govern the application of what it means now to us today. The historico-artistic interpretation of Genesis 1 does justice to its literary structure and to the general biblical perspective on natural events.

From time immemorial people have speculated about how the world began. Many fascinating myths and legends date from the dawn of civilization in the Middle East. Reflecting polytheistic religion, they feature violent struggles by a variety of deities for supremacy over the world.

For example, Sumerian tablets around 2500 B.C. present a pantheon of four prominent gods, among them Enki who leads a host of the gods against Nammu, the primeval sea. In one Egyptian myth the sun god Re emerges from the deep to create all other things. The best known of the creation myths is the Babylonian national epic Enuma Elish, which was composed primarily to glorify the god Marduk and the city of Babylon. Amid such a mythological environment Israel fled from Egypt, wandered in the wilderness and took possession of Canaan.

The biblical creation accounts in Genesis have some similarities with those of Israel's pagan neighbors as well as several radical differences. The relative importance of those elements has been a focal point of theological controversy for more than a century. Some issues have been resolved, but considerable confusion persists over the nature and purpose of Genesis 1.

Genesis is a book of beginnings: the origin of the universe, birth of the human race and founding of the Hebrew family. Yet the book is more than an account of origins. It provides a foundation for many themes prominent throughout the Old and New Testaments.
Here one learns about God, humanity and nature in their mutual relationships. The Creator and Controller of the universe reveals himself as the Lord and judge of history, which has both a purpose and goal. Such great doctrines as creation, sin and salvation trace their beginnings to this remarkable book. Concepts of covenant, grace, election and redemption permeate God's saving activity to overcome the consequences of evil and sin. It should not surprise us that Genesis, more than any other part of the Bible, has been a scene of historical, literary, theological and scientific battles. Some of those battles have made their way out of church and seminary into the schools and courts.

† This article is taken from chapter 10, "Genesis One: Origin of the Universe," of the book *The Galileo Connection*, recently released by InterVarsity Press (Downers Grove, Ill.: 1986, 296 pp., paper, $8.95).
Much of the controversy arises from a misunderstanding of what the Genesis account of creation intends to teach. What message was it meant to convey to ancient Israelites in their struggle against the pagan mythologies of the surrounding countries? How does that meaning apply in a post-Christian culture whose gods and values infiltrate even the church?

**Approach to Genesis**

An interpretation of Genesis 1 must deal with three elements: historical context, literary genre and textual content. Many commentaries skip lightly over the first two in an eagerness to grasp the meaning for today. As a result their interpretations at critical points would hardly have been intelligible to ancient Israel, much less equip God's people to resist the influence of pagan mythologies. Therefore, we will adhere to the following principle: What the author meant then determines what the message means now.

**Historical Context**

What was the situation of the Israelites who received the message of Genesis, especially their cultural and religious environment? The answer to that question depends to a large extent on certain assumptions about the authorship and date of the document. Two main approaches have dominated the interpretation of Genesis during the last century.

One position rejects the Mosaic authorship and early date of the Pentateuch along with its divine inspiration and trustworthiness. The developmental view of the nineteenth century treated those five books as the culmination of a long process of social growth. It assumed that, culturally and religiously, humankind has moved through evolving states from savagery to civilization. But, as new data provided by archeology tended to discredit that view, the comparative religion model became increasingly popular. It holds Genesis 1-11 to be a Jewish borrowing and adaptation of the religions of neighboring nations. Both views consider the Pentateuch to be writing of unknown authors or redactors (editors) long after Moses, probably late in the period of the Hebrew monarchy.
A contrasting position holds that Moses wrote most of the Pentateuch (though he may have used earlier sources) and that some editing took place after his death. The historical-cultural model used in this paper assumes that the Genesis creation narratives were given to the Israelites in the wilderness, after the exodus from Egypt but before the conquest of Canaan. This view considers the Pentateuch to be a revelation from God, through his prophet Moses, to Israel en route to the Promised Land. An understanding of the historical context and primary purpose of that revelation lays the foundation for our interpretation.

For more than four hundred years the Hebrews had languished in Egypt far from the land promised to Abraham. Those centuries took a spiritual as well as physical toll. The people had no Scriptures, only a few oral traditions of the patriarchs. Devotion to the God of their forefather Joseph had largely been, supplanted by worship of the gods of other nations. The incident of the golden calf suggests that fertility cults may have been part of Hebrew religious life in Egypt (Ex. 32:1-6). Even though they were miraculously delivered from slavery and led toward Canaan, many of the people may have had a minimal understanding of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

When the wanderers arrived at Horeb, their worldview and lifestyle differed little from that of the surrounding nations. Their culture was essentially pagan. Now God was calling them to keep his covenant, to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). Although the people responded, their yes was just the beginning of a long, painful process by which God would create a new culture.

Although trained by God in Pharoah's house and then in the hills forty years, Moses faced a formidable
task. His people needed a radically different theology for a knowledge of God and his purposes; a new cosmogony to restructure their attitudes toward the created order; a new religious institution to guide their worship; a new anthropology to understand the human of condition; and a different lifestyle for moral and ethical living. The five books of Moses were designed to make his the Hebrews a people of God through a divinely instituted culture.

The location of God's people at that point is significant. In each pagan nation the gods, of which there were hundreds, permeated and dominated every aspect of life. A people and their gods formed an organic whole with their land. Religion existed for the welfare of society, not primarily for the individual. Religious change was not possible; it occurred only when one nation conquered another. Even then the defeated gods were usually absorbed into the victorious pantheon. In Egypt, for example, only Egyptian gods were worshiped. Hence Moses had initially asked Pharaoh to permit the Hebrews to go three days' journey into the wilderness to worship their God; there the Egyptian gods had no power and need not be feared. Now God had created for the Hebrews a religious crisis that opened them to the new order he desired to institute. The events of Sinai could never have taken place in Goshen.

Although Israel had left Egypt behind, they still retained its world-view. Paganism is more than polytheism; it is a way of looking at the whole of life. So a complete break with Israel's past required the strong antipagan teaching provided in the Pentateuch, beginning with Genesis.

Literary Genre

What kind of literature are we dealing with? Is it prose or poetry, history or parable? Only after that question is answered can the appropriate interpretive guidelines be applied.

The style of Genesis 1 is remarkable for its simplicity, its economy of language. Yet to ask whether it is prose or poetry is a serious oversimplification. Although we do not find here the synonymous parallelism and
rhythms of Hebrew, poetry, the passage has a number of alliterations. The prominence of repetition and of its corollary, silence, brings the writing close to poetry; its movement toward, a climax places it in the order of prose. Sometimes called a "hymn," it appears to be a unique blend of prose and poetry.¹

Although it has no trace of rhetoric, the passage does use figurative language for describing God's activity: anthropomorphisms which represent God as if he were a human being-speaking and seeing, working and resting. Yet a conclusion that Genesis 1 is semipoetic and has figurative language by no means determines the main question--the connection of the narrative with actual events.

Once for all we need to get rid of the deep-seated feeling that figurative speech is inferior to literal language, as if it were somewhat less worthy of God. The Hebrew language is rich in figures of speech. Scripture abounds with symbols and metaphors which the Holy Spirit has used to convey powerfully and clearly the message he intended. What would be left of Psalm 23, for example, if it were stripped of its figurative language? Further, we must give up the false antithesis that prose is fact while poetry is fiction (prose = literal = fact, and poetry = figurative = fiction). Indeed, prose writing often has figures of speech and can recount a legend or parable as well as history; by the same token, poetry may have little if any figurative language and narrate actual events. The prophets, for example, recalled past facts and predicted future events with a welter of symbols and images as well as literal description. (See Ezekiel 16 and 22 for two versions of the same events.) Jesus summarized centuries of Hebrew history in his parable of the wicked tenants (Mt. 21:33-41). Good biblical interpretation recognizes and appreciates this marvelous and effective variety of literary expression.
Genesis 1 appears to be a narrative of past events, an account of God's creative words and acts. Its figurative language is largely limited to anthropomorphisms. (For a highly imaginative and figurative account of creation, read Job 38:4-11.) The text does not have the earmarks of a parable, a short allegorical story designed to teach a truth or moral lesson. That genre generally deals with human events and often starts with a formula like "There was a man who had two sons" in Jesus' parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-31). Genesis 1 is "historical" in the sense of relating events that actually occurred. Modern historians distinguish between "history," which began with the invention of writing or the advent of city life, and "prehistory."
According to that definition, the events in Genesis 1 are prehistorical. Nevertheless the writing can be called historical narrative, or primeval history, to distinguish it from legend or myth, in which ideas are simply expressed in the form of a story.

Our interpretation of a passage should also be guided by its structure. Narrators have the freedom to tell a story in their own way, including its perspective, purpose, development and relevant content. The importance of this principle comes to focus in the Genesis 1 treatment of time. The dominating concepts and concerns of our century are dramatically different from those of ancient Israel. For example, our scientific approach to the natural world seeks to quantify and measure, calculate and theorize, about the mechanism of those events. For us time is as important a dimension as space, so we automatically tend to assume that a historical account must present a strict chronological sequence. But the biblical writers are not bound by such concerns and constrictions. Even within an overall chronological development they have freedom to cluster certain events by topic. For example, Matthew's Gospel has alternating sections of narrative and teaching grouped according to subject matter, a sort of literary club sandwich. Since Matthew did not intend to provide a strict chronological sequence for the events in Jesus' ministry, to search for it there would be futile.

By the same token our approach to Genesis 1 should not assume that the events are necessarily in strict chronological order. An examination of the phrases used by the author reveals his emphasis on the creative word: "And God said" appears eight times, in each case to begin a four-line poem (figure 1). These poems form the basic structure of the narrative. (The third and seventh poems do not have the final line, "And there was evening, and there was morning," since they are combined with the fourth and eighth creative words, respectively, to link with the third and sixth days.) Although the eight poems vary in length and minor details, they have the same basic format.

It also becomes evident that the eight words are linked with the six days in an overall symmetrical structure (figure 2). The second half of the week (fourth to sixth days) parallels the first half. Augustine noted this literary framework early in the church's
history. He believed that everything had been created at once and that the structure of the days is intended to teach the "order" in creation. Two centuries ago J. G. von Herder recognized the powerful symmetry between the two triads of days. The two have been contrasted in several ways: creation of spaces and then their inhabitants forming of the world followed by its filling. Such a sequence is indicated by the conclusion

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<td>And there was evening, and there was morning--the fifth day.</td>
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Interpreting Genesis One

7 6  (a) Then God said, "Let . . ."  24
     (b) And it was so.
     (c) And God saw that it was good.
     (d)
8     (a) Then God said, "Let . . ."  26
     (b) And it was so.
     (c) God saw ... it was very good.
     (d) And there was evening, and there
         was morning--the sixth day.

Figure 1. Eight Poems of Genesis 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative Words</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 (verse 3)</td>
<td>light</td>
<td>5 (verse 14)</td>
<td>luminaries</td>
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<td>2 (verse 6)</td>
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<td>6 (verse 20)</td>
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<td>4 (verse 11)</td>
<td>land &amp; vegetation</td>
<td>8 (verse 26)</td>
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<td>humankind</td>
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Figure 2. Literary Structure of Genesis 1
of the narrative in Genesis 2:1 (RSV): "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed [days 1-3] and all the host of them [the crowds of living organisms, days 4-6]."

The writer's use of the significant numbers 3, 7 and 10 also highlights the careful construction of the creation account. It starts with three problem elements (formless earth, darkness and watery deep) which are dealt with in two sets of three days; the verb "create" is used at three points in the narrative, the third time thrice. Both the completion formula, "and it was so," and the divine approval, "God saw that it was good," appear seven times. The phrase "God said," the verb "make" and the formula "according to its/their kind" appear ten times.

In both its overall structure and use of numbers the writer paid as much attention to the form as to the content of the narrative, a fact which suggests mature meditation. The historico-artistic interpretation of Genesis 1 does justice to its literary craftsmanship, the general biblical perspective on natural events and the view of creation expressed by other writers in both Old and New Testaments.

Interpretation of Genesis 1

The third step, after determining the historical context and literary genre, is to discover what this account of creation means to the first readers. Although a thorough exegesis cannot be done in a few pages, we can note the narrative's development and the meaning of several key words.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. (v. 1)

God is not only the subject of the first sentence, he is central to the entire narrative. It mentions him thirty-four times. The phrase "God created" can also be translated "When God began to create," but the latter translation is linguistically cumbersome; it also seems to connote a dualism incompatible with the rest of the chapter.

The meaning of the word "create" (bara) in this context is determined in the light of its meanings elsewhere in the Old Testament. Its subject is always God; its object may be things (Is. 40:26) or situations (Is.
The specific context determines whether the creation is an initial bringing into existence (Is. 48:3, 7) or a process leading to completion (Gen. 2:1-4; Is. 65:18).

The Bible's opening statement may be taken as either the beginning of God's creative activity or a summary of the account that follows. Either way, the "beginning" includes not only the material universe but also time itself. Since all of our thought and action occurs within a time scale of past/present/future, we find it difficult if not impossible to conceive of timelessness. Yet as Augustine observed many centuries ago, God created not in time but with time.  

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep. (v. 2)  

The writer expands on his initial statement, making the earth his vantage point (compare Ps. 115:16). He uses two rhyming words, *tohu* and *bohu*, to describe a somber scene: a trackless waste, formless and empty in the utter darkness. Those two words signifying a lack of form and content provide a key to the chapter's literary structure.

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light .... And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. (vv. 3-5)  

Here is the first of eight creative commands distributed over six days. A major focus of the narrative is the word of God: God "speaks" and it is done. The Hebrew *amar* has a variety of meanings. Its use in Genesis 1 emphasizes God's creative command, his pledge to sustain the creation and his revelation as the Creator (this theme is echoed in Psalm 148:5 and Hebrews 11:3). The words leave no room for the divine emanation and struggle so prominent in pagan religions. Nevertheless there has been too much emphasis on God's creating simply by command. Only verses 3 and 9 report creation by word alone; the other six occurrences include both a word and an act of some kind, indicated by verbs such as *make, separate* and *set*.  

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The creation of light marks the first step from primeval formlessness to order. "God saw that the light was good" (v. 4). There is no hint of ethical dualism, good and evil coexisting from eternity. To some of the pagans day and night were warring powers. Not so here. The Creator assigns to everything its value (4a), place (4b) and meaning (5a).
And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water."... And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. (vv. 6-8)

An expanse or firmament separates the waters below (the seas and underground springs) from those above in the clouds which provide rain. Unlike the first day, the creative command here is followed by an action: "So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so" (v. 7). That combination of word and act also occurs on the fourth day: "God made two great lights ... made the stars ... set them in the expanse of the sky" (vv. 16-17); and on the fifth day, "God created the great creatures of the sea ... "(v. 21). The wording for the sixth day is unusual in that God commands himself, so to speak, and then does it: "Then God said, 'Let us make man'. .. So God created- man. .. "(vv. 26-27). This variety of wording for the eight creative events/processes should caution against an attempt to formulate one basic procedure or mechanism for the creation.

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. (vv. 9-10)

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees."... And it was so... And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. (vv. 11-13)

Two events are linked to the third day. In the first, a creative command continues to give form to the world through differentiation, the land from the sea. In the second, a procreative action of the land, empowered by God, brings forth vegetation in an orderly fashion "according to their various kinds." That phrase, also used for the reproduction of animals (v. 24), would be especially meaningful to the Hebrews, since pagan
mythologies featured grotesque human-beast hybrids. (The concept fixity of species, often read into this phrase, would have been unintelligible to the original hearers.) Here God commands the earth to produce something, and it does so.

The emphasis has begun to shift from form toward fulness, which becomes prominent in the remaining creative words. Originally formless and empty, the earth is now structured (through the division of light from darkness, upper from lower waters, dry land from the seas) and clothed with green, ready for its inhabitants. What God has formed he now fills. The second half of the week generally parallels the events of the first.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night." . . . God made two great lights ... to govern the day and ... the night. . . And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. (vv. 14-19)

The expanse of the, sky is now filled with the stars, sun and moon "to give light on the earth." (Our problem of how the earth could be lighted [v. 4] before the sun appeared comes when we require the narrative to be a strict chronological account.) It is significant that the sun and moon are not mentioned by name—because those common Semitic terms were also the names of deities. This description may be seen as a protest against every kind of astral worship, so prevalent in the surrounding nations. Here the heavenly bodies do not, reign as gods but serve as signs (see Ps. 121:6). They "govern" (vv. 16, 18) only as bearers of light, not as wielders of power. These few sentences undercut a superstition as old as Egypt and as modern as today's newspaper horoscope.

And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." . . . And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. (vv. 20-23)

The sea and sky are now filled with their inhabitants. The word for birds literally means "flying things" and includes insects (compare Dent 14:19-20). The special reference to great creatures (tanninim, "sea monsters") also serves a polemic purpose. To the Canaanites the
word was an ominous term for the powers of chaos confronting the god Baal in the beginning. In the Old Testament the word appears without any mythological overtones; it is simply a generic term for a large water animal.

And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds." . . . And it was so. God made the wild animals according to their kinds. (vv. 24-25)

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." . . . So God created man in his own image, . . . male and female he created them . . . . God saw all that he had made and it was
very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day. (vv. 26-31)

The seventh and eighth creative acts are linked to the sixth day. The former populates the land with three representative groups of animals: "livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals." The creative action here parallels that in verse 20-23, but is unique in one respect: God commands the earth to do something, yet he himself makes it. Here as elsewhere in the Bible, what we call "natural" reproduction and God's creative activity are two sides of the same coin.

The eighth act produces man and woman both in nature and over it. They share the sixth day with other land creatures, and also God's blessing to be fruitful and increase; yet their superiority is evident in the words Let us make (instead of "Let the land produce") and in the mandate to "fill the earth and subdue it." Human uniqueness lies in the relationship to God: "Let us make man in our image"--that of a rational, morally responsible and social being. The words male and female at this juncture have profound implications. To define humanity as bisexual makes the partners complementary and anticipates the New Testament teaching of their equality ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"--Gal. 3:28).

The culmination of creation in man and woman who are to rule over the earth and its inhabitants is especially significant to Israel. In pagan mythology the creation of mankind was an afterthought to provide the gods with food and satisfy other physical needs. But in Genesis 1 the situation is reversed. The plants and trees are a divine provision for human need (v. 29). From start to finish the creation narrative challenges and opposes the essential tenets of the pagan religions of Egypt, where the Hebrews stayed so long, and of Canaan, where they would soon be living.

At each stage of creation, six times, God has pronounced his work to be good. "Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array" (Gen. 2:1). The creation narrative then concludes with a seventh day.
By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. (vv. 2:2-3)

The word rested means "ceased" (from sabat, the root of "sabbath"). It is a rest of achievement or Pleasure, not of weariness or inactivity, since God constantly nurtures what he has created. Nature is not self-existent but is constantly upheld by his providential power.

This part of the narrative has an immediate application embodied in the Ten Commandments. The seven-day format is given as a model for Israel's work week and sabbath rest:

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. (Ex. 20:8-11)

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created. (v. 2:4a)

The narrative finally ends with a "colophon," a statement that identifies a document's contents, which we generally put at the beginning of a book.

The Creation Days

Much controversy over the interpretation of Genesis focuses on the meaning of the word day. Many commentaries wade into that question first and soon bog down in a hermeneutical quagmire. First one's perspective on the chapter should be defined. Since no one is completely objective, it is not a question of whether we have an interpretive model but which one we are using.

The comparative religion approach views Genesis 1 as the work of an unknown author long after Moses, and considers its creation account as being similar to the primitive stories in other Semitic religions. The concordist model assumes a harmony between the Genesis 1 and scientific accounts of creation, and seeks to demonstrate the Bible's scientific accuracy. The historical-cultural approach views the narrative as given by Moses to Israel in the wilderness, and tries to discover
what the message meant then without any attempt to harmonize it with either past or present scientific theories.

Throughout the Old Testament the word "day" (*yom*) is used in a variety of ways. Usually meaning a "day" of the week, the word can also mean "time" (Gen. 4:3), a specific "period" or "era" (Is. 2:12; 4:2), or a "season" (Josh. 24:7). We have already noted the literary symmetry of eight creative words linked to six days, which occur in two parallel sets of three. The six days mark the development from a dark, formless, empty and lifeless earth to one that is lighted, shaped and filled with teeming varieties of life, culminating in the creation of man and woman.

The author's purpose--teaching about God and his creation in order to counteract the pagan myths of neighboring countries--has become clear in our exposition of Genesis 1. Israel's God is the all-powerful Creator of heaven and earth. His world is orderly and
consistent. Man and woman are the culmination of creation, made in the image of God, to enjoy and be responsible for their stewardship of the earth.

The literary genre is a semipoetic narrative cast in a historico-artistic framework consisting of two parallel triads. On this interpretation, it is no problem that the creation of the sun, necessary for an earth clothed with vegetation on the third day, should be linked with the fourth day. Instead of turning hermeneutical handsprings to explain that supposed difficulty, we simply note that in view of the author's purpose the question is irrelevant. The account does not follow the chronological sequence assumed by concordist views.\(^\text{10}\)

The meaning of the word day must be determined (like any other word with several meanings) by the context and usage of the author. A plain reading of the text, with its recurring phrase of evening and morning, indicates a solar day of twenty-four hours. That would have been clear to Moses and his first readers. The context gives no connotation of an era or geological age. Creation is pictured in six familiar periods followed by a seventh for rest, corresponding to the days of the week as Israel knew them. But the question still remains whether the format is figurative or literal, that is, an analogy of God's creative activity or a chronological account of how many hours He worked.

God is a spirit whom no one can see, whose thoughts and ways are higher than ours. So (apart from the Incarnation) we can know him only through analogy, "a partial similarity between like features of two things, on which a comparison may be based."\(^\text{11}\) In the Bible the human person is the central model used to reveal God's relationship and actions in history. God is pictured as seeing, speaking and hearing like a person even though he doesn't have eyes, lips or ears. Those figures of speech (anthropomorphisms) assure us that God is at least personal and can be known in an intimate relationship. (Science also uses analogies; for example, a billiard-ball model in physics helps us understand the behavior of gas molecules which we cannot see.)

The human model appears throughout Genesis 1, The writer also links God's creative activity to six days, marked by evening and morning, and followed by a day of rest. In the light of the other analogies, why
should it be considered necessary to take this part of the account literally, as if God actually worked for six days (or epochs) and then rested? Biblical interpretation should not suddenly change hermeneutical horses in the middle of the exegetical stream.

A stringent literalism disregards the analogical medium of revelation about precreation, raising meaningless questions about God's working schedule. For example, did he labor around the clock or intermittently on twelve-hour days? If God created light instantaneously, was the first day then mostly one of rest like the seventh? How did the plant and animal reproductive processes he constituted on succeeding days fit so neatly into that schedule?

The fact that the text speaks of twenty-four-hour days does not require that they be considered the actual duration of God's creative activity. Even on a human level, when we report the significant achievements of someone in a position of power, the length of the working day is generally irrelevant. For example, a historian might write, "President Roosevelt decided to build the atomic bomb and President Truman ordered its use to destroy Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war with Japan. Two days radically changed the entire character of modern warfare." The exact details of how and when the commands were implemented over years or weeks are unimportant to the main concern of who and why, and what resulted.

Preoccupation with how long it took God to create the world, in days or epochs, deflects attention from the main point of Genesis 1. Such "scientific" concerns run interpretation onto a siding, away from the main track of God's revelation. Once we get past arguments over the length of the days, we can see the intended meaning of these days for Israel. First, their significance lies not in identity, a one-to-one correlation with God's creative activity, but in an analogy that provides a model for human work. The pattern of six plus one, work plus rest on the seventh day, highlights the sabbath. In doing so, it emphasizes the uniqueness of humanity. Made in the image of God, and given rule over the world, man and woman are the crown of creation. They rest from their labor on the sabbath, which is grounded in the creation (Gen. 2:2, Ex 20:11).
metaphor uses the commonplace (or commonly understood, if you wish) meaning of a word in a figurative manner. When, for example, Jesus calls Herod "that fox" (Lk. 13:32), the word does not refer vaguely to any animal but to that one whose characteristics are well known; yet Jesus doesn't mean that Herod is literally a fox. Likewise, when David in Psalm 23 says, "The Lord is my shepherd," he refers not to just any kind of animal keeper but to one who cares for sheep. It is the commonplace meaning of fox and shepherd that makes the metaphor understandable. So the fact that the day in Genesis 1 has its ordinary work-a-day meaning, and does not refer to an epoch of some kind, makes possible the metaphor of God's creative activity as a model for human work of six days followed by sabbath rest.

Linking God's creative activity to days of the week serves as another element in the antipagan polemic. "By stretching the creation events over the course of a series of days the sharpest possible line has been drawn between this account and every form of mythical thinking. It is history that is here reported--once for all and of irrevocable finality in its results." Genesis 1 contrasts sharply with the cyclical, recurring creations described by Israel's pagan neighbors.

Two other interpretations of the days have been advanced. P. J. Wiseman considers them days of revelation with the narrative given over a period of six days, each on its own tablet. He notes a precedent for that literary form in other ancient literature. It has also been suggested that Genesis 1 was used liturgically somewhat like the narratives in other religions. Whatever the merits of those views, they at least use the historical-cultural model to focus on what the narrative could have meant to the first hearers.

The Significance of Genesis 1

During the last century, Genesis 1 has suffered much from Western interpreters. Liberal literary criticism removes the divine authority of its message through Moses; conservative concentration on implications for science misses its intended meaning. Scholars from the theological left, armed with scissors and paste, have rearranged supposed authors and dates into a variety of configurations. Commentators from the right, scientific
texts in hand, have repeatedly adjusted their interpretations to harmonize with the latest theories. In the process, the message of Genesis 1 has been so muffled that the average reader wonders what it means and whether it can be trusted. Hence we conclude by summarizing the significance of its account for ancient Israel, biblical theology, modern science and the church's life today.

Israel at Mount Sinai

Genesis 1 achieves a radical and comprehensive affirmation of monotheism versus every kind of false religion (polytheism, idolatry, animism, pantheism and syncretism); superstition (astrology and magic); and philosophy (materialism, ethical dualism, naturalism and nihilism). That is a remarkable achievement for so short an account (about 900 words) written in everyday language and understood by people in a variety of cultures for more than three thousand years. Each day of creation aims at two kinds of gods in the pantheons of the time: gods of light and darkness; sky and sea; earth and vegetation; sun, moon and stars; creatures in sea and air; domestic and wild animals; and finally human rulers. Though no human beings are divine, all—from pharaohs to slaves—are made in the image of God and share in the commission to be stewards of the earth.

For Israel those were life-and-death issues of daily existence. God's people do not need to know the how of creation; but they desperately need to know the Creator. Their God, who has brought them into covenant relationship with himself, is no less than the Creator and Controller of the world. He is not like the many pagan gods who must struggle for a period of time in their creative activity. He is stronger than all the powers that stand between his people and the Promised Land, the only One worthy of their worship and total commitment. Creation is the ground of Israel's hope for preservation as God's chosen people. For them the doctrine of creation is not so much a cosmogony as a confession of faith repeatedly expressed in psalms and prophecies throughout the Old Testament.
Biblical Theology
Both Old and New Testaments connect God's creative power with his redeeming love.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them—the Lord, who remains faithful forever.
(Ps. 146:5-6)
In last days he has spoken to us by his Son ... through whom he made the universe.... sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

(Heb. 1:2-3)

God the Creator of the universe is the Lord and judge of history who comes in Jesus Christ to demonstrate his saving love and power. Three great creeds emerging from the church's early theological controversies—the Apostles', Nicene and Chalcedonian—affirm that fundamental connection. It has provided the basis for creativity and meaning in human life, and for Christian confidence in ultimate victory over all forms of evil. Thus creation is also closely connected with eschatology, the doctrine of the end-times in which God ultimately vindicates his own creativity.

Eschatology is more than futurology, despite prevalent fascination about time tables of future events. It deals with the fulfillment of what God initiated in creation. God creates through his eternal Word; he also redeems and brings to completion through the incarnation and glorification of the same Word in Jesus of Nazareth. "Creation, as the going forth from God, is simultaneously the first step of the return to God; and the return is the completion of the journey begun in creation. God creates for a purpose which becomes known as the future of the world in the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ." Even though creation has scientific and philosophical implications, its central significance is theological.

The Scientific Enterprise

The positive contribution of biblical teaching about God and the world to the development of modern science has been well documented. Yet a certain kind of modern theology has considered the biblical description of nature a liability, requiring "demythologizing" to make it acceptable to a scientific age. Actually, Genesis 1 prepared the way for our age by its own program of demythologizing. By purging the cosmic order of all gods and goddesses, the Genesis creation account "de-divinized" nature. The universe has no divine regions or beings who need to be feared or placated. Israel's intensely monotheistic faith thor-
oughly demythologized the natural world, making way for a science that can probe and study every part of the universe without fearing either trespass or retribution. That does not mean that nature is secular and no longer sacred. It is still God's creation, declared to be good, preserved by his power and intended for his glory. The disappearance of mythical scenes and polytheistic intrigues clears the stage for the great drama of redemption and the new creation in Christ.

The Contemporary Church

Meanwhile, the doctrine of creation has profound implications for contemporary Christian thought and life. Study of Genesis 1 illuminates two major questions that should concern Christians in modern culture. First, what false gods command a following in our society and even in our churches? Although they differ radically from the false deities of ancient Israel's neighbors, their worship can produce similar results. In order to escape the influence of current unbiblical philosophies, religious ideas and superstitions, the message of Genesis 1 is urgently needed.

Second, in a day of increasing environmental concerns, what actions should Christians take as stewards of the earth? Environmental problems have scientific and technological, political and economic, social and legal aspects. Important moral and ethical concerns derive from the biblical doctrines of creation and human responsibility for the earth. Basic to such concerns is our understanding of nature. Most other religions view the world as spiritual in itself or as irrelevant to spiritual concerns. But in the biblical view, the natural world is created, material and significant in God's purposes. From that teaching come basic principles which are belatedly receiving attention from Christian writers. Surely the church needs a solid contemporary theology of creation to help define our human relationship to the natural world.

The doctrine of creation is foundational for God's providential care of his creation, for his redemption of humanity and for his re-creation of a new heaven and earth. Its teaching of God's transcendent sovereignty
and power is embodied in a hymn in the last book of the Bible:

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.

(Rev. 4:11)
Before 1750 it was generally held that God created the world in six twenty-four-hour days, although some early church fathers like Augustine viewed them allegorically. Archbishop Ussher around 1650 even calculated the date of creation to be 4004 B.C. But as the science of geology matured in the 1800's, many were shocked to discover that the earth was millions of years old. Since modern science had gained so much prestige, many interpreters strove to retain credibility for the Bible by attempting to demonstrate its scientific accuracy. Therefore, a variety of concordistic (harmonizing) views were proposed to correlate biblical teaching with current scientific theories.

For example, "flood geology" attempted to account for fossil discoveries through the catastrophe of a universal flood. When new geological discoveries questioned that view, it was replaced by the "restitution" or "gap" theory popularized by a Scottish clergyman, Thomas Chalmers, in 1804. According to that view a catastrophe occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 to allow the necessary time for the geological formations to develop. Eventually it became necessary to assume a series of catastrophies or floods to account for newer scientific findings.

Although such theories accounted for the time that science required, they could not explain the sequence of the geological record. The "day-age" interpretation considered the Genesis days to be metaphorical for geological ages. That view was advocated by influential North American geologists J. W. Dawson and James Dana as well as many theologians. The Genesis days were then correlated, more or less accurately, with the proposed epochs. Another version retained literal twenty-four-hour days of creative activity, but separated them by geological epochs.

The above views, with varying degrees of credibility, have in common three major problems. First, they attempt to find answers to questions the text does not address, about the how or the mechanism of natural forces. (To see how inappropriate such an approach is, consider its opposite: suppose one tried to derive information about the meaning and purpose of life from a technical treatise on astronomy in which the author had no intention of revealing his philosophy.) The biblical accounts of creation do not provide scientific data or descriptions. John Calvin emphasized that point: "The Holy
Spirit had no intention to teach astronomy. He made use by Moses and the other prophets of the popular language that none might shelter himself under the pretext of obscurity."\(^{19}\)

Adapting Calvin's principle to the present we can affirm, The Holy Spirit had no intention of teaching geology and biology."

Second, not only do the concordistic views strain Genesis by importing concepts foreign to the text, but any apparent success in harmonizing the message with "modern science" guarantees a failure when current scientific theory is revised or discarded. During the last two centuries, that pattern has been evident in the continual efforts of harmonizers to keep abreast of rapidly changing scientific views. The credibility of the Bible is not enhanced by thrusting it into the scramble of catch-up in a game it was never intended to play. What is the point of trying to correlate the ultimate truths of Scripture with the ever-changing theories of science? No wonder that when those theories go out of date, in the minds of many people the Bible joins them in gathering dust on the shelf.

Third, any extent to which Genesis teaches modern scientific concepts would have made its message unintelligible to its first readers, and to most of the people who have lived during the last three thousand years. Even in our own century, what per cent of the people understand the abstract language of science? And of those who do, how many use it in the communications of daily life with which the biblical writers are primarily concerned?

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The Narrative Form of Genesis 1: Cosmogonic, Yes; Scientific, No

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A basic mistake through much of the history of interpreting Genesis 1 is the failure to identify the type of literature and linguistic usage it represents. This has often led, in turn, to various attempts at bringing Genesis into harmony with the latest scientific theory or the latest scientific theory into harmony with Genesis. Such efforts might be valuable, and indeed essential, if it could first be demonstrated (rather than assumed) that the Genesis materials belonged to the same class of literature and linguistic usage as modern scientific discourse.

A careful examination of the 6-day account of creation, however, reveals that there is a serious category-mistake involved in these kinds of comparisons. The type of narrative form with which Genesis 1 is presented is not natural history but a cosmogony. It is like other ancient cosmogonies in the sense that its basic structure is that of movement from chaos to cosmos. Its logic, therefore, is not geological or biological but cosmological. On the other hand it is radically unlike other ancient cosmogonies in that it is a monotheistic cosmogony; indeed it is using the cosmogonic form to deny and dismiss all polytheistic cosmogonies and their attendant worship of the gods and goddesses of nature. In both form and content, then, Genesis I reveals that its basic purposes are religious and theological, not scientific or historical.

Different ages and different cultures have conceptually organized the cosmos in different ways. Even the history of science has offered many ways of organizing the universe, from Ptolemaic to Newtonian to Einsteinian. How the universe is conceptually organized is immaterial to the concerns of Genesis. The central point being made is that, however this vast array of phenomena is organized into regions and forms--and Genesis 1 has its own method of organization for its own purposes--all regions and forms are the objects of divine creation and sovereignty. Nothing outside this one Creator God is to be seen as independent or divine.

In one of the New Guinea tribes the entire universe of known phenomena is subdivided into two groupings: those things related to the red cockatoo, and those related to the white cockatoo. Since there are both red and white cockatoos in the region, these contrasting plumages have become the
focal points around which everything is conceptually organized. The religious message of Genesis relative to this "cockatoo-cosmos" would not be to challenge its scientific acceptability, but to affirm that all that is known as red cockatoo, and all that is known as white cockatoo, is created by the one true God.

Or, one may take a similar example from traditional China, where all phenomena have, from early antiquity, been divided up according to the principles of Yang and Yin. Yang

This is the second of two essays on interpreting the creation texts, the first of which appeared in the September 1984 issue of the journal.
is light; yin is darkness. Yang is heaven; yin is earth. Yang is sun; yin is moon. Yang is rock; yin is water. Yang is male; yin is female. It would be inappropriate to enter into a discussion of the scientific merits of the Chinese system relative to the organization of Genesis 1; for what Genesis, with its own categories, is affirming is that the totality of what the Chinese would call Yang and Yin forces are created by God who transcends and governs them all.

There are certain uniquenesses in the 6-day approach to organizing the cosmic totality, spacially and temporally, but the--point of these uniquenesses is not to provide better principles of organization, or a truer picture of the universe, in any scientific or historical sense. It is to provide a truer theological picture of the universe, and the respective places of nature, humanity and divinity within the religious order of things. In order to perform these theological and religious tasks, it was essential to use a form which would clearly affirm a monotheistic understanding of the whole of existence, and decisively eliminate any basis for a polytheistic understanding.

The Cosmogonic Form

The alternative to the "creation model" of Genesis was obviously not an "evolutionary model." Its competition, so to speak, in the ancient world was not a secular, scientific theory of any sort, but various religious myths of origin found among surrounding peoples: Egyptian, Canaanite, Hittite, Assyrian, Babylonian, to name the most prominent. The field of engagement, therefore, between Jewish-monotheism and the polytheism of other peoples was in no way the field of science or natural history. It was the field of cosmology which, in its ancient form, has some resemblances to science, but is nevertheless quite different.

Given this as the field of engagement, Genesis 1 is cast in cosmological form--though, of course, without the polytheistic content, and in fact over against it. What form could be more relevant to the situation, and the issues of idolatry and syncretism, than this form? Inasmuch as the passage is dealing specifically with origins, it may be said to be cosmogonic. Thus, in order to interpret its meaning properly, and to understand why its materials are organized in this particular way, one has to learn to think cosmogonically, not scientifically or, historically--just as in interpreting the parables of Jesus one has to learn to think parabolically. If one is especially attached to the word "literal," then Genesis 1
"literally" is not a scientific or historical statement, but is a cosmological and cosmogonic statement which is serving very basic theological purposes. To be faithful to it, and to faithfully interpret it, is to be faithful to what it literally is, not what people living in a later age assume or desire it to be.

Various patterns, themes and images used in Genesis 1 are familiar to the cosmogonic literatures of other ancient peoples. To point this out does not detract in the least from the integrity of Genesis. Rather, it helps considerably in understanding the peculiar character and concern of this kind of narrative literature. And it indicates more clearly where the bones of contention are to be located, and what the uniquenesses of the Genesis view of creation are.

The act of creation, for example, begins in Genesis 1:2 in a way that is very puzzling to modern interpreters, yet very natural to ancient cosmogonies: with a picture of primordial chaos. This chaos--consisting of darkness, watery deep and formless earth--is then formed, ordered, assigned its proper place and function, in short, cosmocized. Chaos is brought under control, and its positive features are made part of the cosmic totality.

If one is determined to interpret the account as a scientific statement, then one would need--to be consistent--to affirm several undesirable things. There is no scientific evidence whatsoever, whether from geology or astronomy, that the initial state of the universe was characterized by a great watery expanse, filling the universe. Nor is there any evidence that the existence of water precedes light (day 1) and sun, moon, and stars (day 4). Nor is there any evidence that the earth in a formless state precedes light (day 1), or sun, moon and stars (day 4). On the theological side, one would also be affirming--if this is to be taken completely literally--that water is co-eternal with God, since nowhere does the account specifically speak of God as creating water. Day 2 refers to water as being separated by the creation of the firmament, and Day 3 only speaks of water as being separated from the earth in order that the formless earth may appear as dry land.

The only viable alternative is to recognize that Genesis 1 is intentionally using a cosmogonic approach, and to reflect on
the logic of the account in its own cosmological terms--not in geological or biological or chronological terms. The account is not pre-scientific or un-scientific but non-scientific--as one may speak of poetry (unpoetically) as non-prose. This does not mean that the materials are in any sense irrational or illogical or fantastic. They are perfectly rational, and have a logic all their own. But that logic is cosmological, and in the service of affirmations that are theological.

So the issue is not at all, How is Genesis to be harmonized with modern science, or modern science harmonized with Genesis? That kind of question is beside the point, if by the question one is proposing to try to synchronize the Genesis materials with materials from the various fields of natural science: biology, geology, paleontology, astronomy, etc. That would presuppose that they are comparable—that they belong to the same type of literature, level of inquiry, and kind of concern. But they do not. Trying to compare them is not even like comparing oranges and apples. It is more like trying to compare oranges and orangutans.

The questions then, are: Why is this cosmogonic form being used, and how does a cosmogonic interpretation make sense of the passage?

Like anything else in biblical literature, the cosmogonic form was used because it was natural, normal and intelligible in that time period. For some, it has been an offense to call attention to ancient Near Eastern parallels of the Genesis materials. This approach has appeared to undermine acceptance of the Bible as a unique vehicle of divine revelation. Yet the Bible, obviously, does not speak with a divine language—which, to say the least, would be unintelligible to all. The biblical authors necessarily used the language forms and literary phrases immediately present and available in Israel, which included materials available through the long history of interaction with surrounding peoples. They did not use a whole new vocabulary, or fresh set of metaphors and symbols, suddenly coined for the purpose or revealed on the spot. When one speaks of the Word of God, one must be careful not to suggest by this term that what is being delivered is some sacred language, complete with heavenly thesaurus and handbook of divine phrases, specially parachuted from above.

Jewish scripture abounds in literary allusion and poetic usage which bear some relation, direct or indirect, to images and themes found among the peoples with which Israel was in
contact. An analogy may be drawn from contemporary English usage which contains innumerable traces of the languages and literatures, myths and legends, customs and beliefs, of a great many cultures and periods which have enriched its development. Thus one finds not only a considerable amount of terminology drawn from Greek, Latin, French, German, etc.—including the terms "term" and "terminology"—but references derived from the myths, legends, fables and fairy tales of many peoples: the Greek Fates, the Roman Fortune, the arrows of Cupid, Woden's day and Thor's day, and even Christmas and Easter.

The issue, then, is not where the language (Hebrew) and certain words and phrases came from, but the uses to which they are put, and the ways in which they are put differently, The cosmogonic form and imagery, in this case, is not chosen in order to espouse these other cosmogonies, or to copy them, or to ape them, or even to borrow from them, but precisely in order to deny them. Putting the issue in terms of "borrowing" or "influence" is to put matters in a misleading way. Various familiar motifs and phrasings to be found in surrounding polytheistic systems are being used, but in such a way as to give radical affirmation to faith in one God, a God who transcends and creates and governs all that which surrounding peoples worship as "god."

Such a God, furthermore, is not only transcendent but immanent in a way that the gods and goddesses could not be. These divinities were neither fully transcendent nor fully immanent, for all were finite, limited, and localized, being associated with one aspect and region of nature. The gods and goddesses of light and darkness, sky and water, earth and vegetation, sun, moon and stars, each had their own particular abode and sphere of power. One or another divinity, such as Marduk of Babylon or Re of Egypt, might rise to supremacy in the pantheon and be exalted above every other name. But they were still restricted and circumscribed in their presence, power and authority.

The biblical affirmation of One God is decisively different from all finite and parochial attributions of divinity. In the words of the Apostle Paul, this God is "above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:6). The very fact that God is "above all" makes possible a God who is at the same time "through all and in all." Radical immanence presupposes
radical transcendence. At the same time all things are in God, for apart from God they have no being; they do not exist. As Paul also says, citing a Greek poet: "He is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28).

Genesis 1 is, thus, a cosmogony to end all (polytheistic) cosmogonies. It has entered, as it were, the playing field of these venerable systems, engaging them on their own turf, with the result that they are soundly defeated. And that victory has prevailed, first in Israel, then in Christianity, and also Islam, and thence through most of subsequent Western civilization, including the development of Western science. Despite the awesome splendor and power of the great
empires that successively dominated Israel and the Near East--Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome--and despite the immediate influence of the divinities in whose names they conquered, these gods and goddesses have long since faded into oblivion, except for archeological, antiquarian or romantic interests. This victory belongs, in large part, to the sweeping and decisive manner with which the Genesis account applied prophetic monotheism to the cosmogonic question.

The Plan of Genesis 1

How, then, does an understanding of this cosmogonic form--as radically reinterpreted in Genesis--help in understanding the organization and movement of the passage?

The emphasis in a cosmogony is on the establishment of order (cosmos), and the maintenance of that order, and therefore upon the ultimate sources of power and authority. Given these concerns, there are three amorphous realities that are seen as especially threatening to order: the watery "deep," darkness, and the formless earth ("waste" and "void"). These potentially chaotic realities must be cosmologized. They are not, however, simply threatening or demonic, but rather ambiguous. They have a potential for good as well as evil, if controlled and placed in an orderly context. The particular organization and movement of Genesis 1 is readily intelligible when this cosmological problem, with which the account begins, is kept clearly in mind.

Water, for example, has no shape of its own. And, unchecked or uncontained, as in flood or storm or raging sea, water can destroy that which has form. Darkness, also, in itself has no form, and is dissolvent of form. Only with the addition of light can shapes and boundaries and delineations appear. Similarly, earth is basically formless--whether as sand, dust, dirt or clay. And it is doubly formless when engulfed by formless and form--destroying water and darkness.

These fundamental problems confronting the establishment and maintenance of an orderly cosmos, therefore, in the logic of the account, need to be confronted and accommodated first. The amorphousness and ambiguousness of water, darkness and formless earth must be dealt with in such a way as to restrain their negative potential and unleash their positive potential. Otherwise, it would be like building a house without giving careful consideration to potential threats in the region, such as the adjacent floodplain, or shifting sand.
The structure of the account, then, is that of beginning with a description of a three-fold problem (the chaotic potential of darkness, water and earth) which is given a solution in the first three days of creation. The first day takes care of the problem of darkness through the creation of light. The second clay takes care of the problem of water through the creation of a firmament in the sky to separate the water into the waters above (rain, snow, hail) and the waters below (sea, rivers, subterranean streams). The third day takes care of the problem of the formless earth by freeing earth from water and darkness, and assigning it to a middle region between light and darkness, sky and underworld.

This then readies the cosmos for populating these various realms in the next three days, like a house which has been readied for its inhabitants. In fact, the third day also takes care of providing food for its forthcoming residents through the creation of vegetation. We thus observe a symmetrical division of the account into three movements (Problem, Preparation, Population), each with three elements. The account could be read as if written in three parallel columns as shown in Table 1.

The problem of the three "chaotic" forces is resolved in the first three days by circumscribing their negative potential and making use of their positive potential. As a result a harmonious context is established in preparation for the population of these three regions. Darkness is contained and counterbalanced by light; water is separated and confined to its proper spheres by the firmament; and the earth is demarcated from the waters, allowing dry land and vegetation to appear.

Thus, with everything readied and in order, the inhabitants of these three cosmicized regions are created and invited to

Table 1
Outline of Genesis 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(vs. 2) Darkness</td>
<td>(days 1-3)</td>
<td>(days 4-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la Creation of light (Day)</td>
<td>4a Creation of Sun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Separation from Darkness (Night)</td>
<td>b Creation of Moon, Stars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watery Abyss</td>
<td>2a Creation of Firmament</td>
<td>5a Creation of Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Separation of Waters above from Waters below</td>
<td>b Creation of Fish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formless Earth</td>
<td>3a Separation of Earth from Sea</td>
<td>6a Creation of Land Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b Creation of Vegetation</td>
<td>b Creation of Humans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
take their proper places. The light and darkness of day one are populated by the sun, moon and stars of day four. The sky and waters of day two are populated by the birds and fish of day five. The earth and vegetation of day three make possible a population by the land animals and human beings of day six.

In this way of reading the account, the dilemmas that arise for a literalist (i.e., scientific and historical) interpretation disappear. The three problems, which are envisioned as difficulties for cosmicizing, are dealt with first, followed by a sketch of the way in which these cosmocized regions are then inhabited. This is the logic of the account. It is not chronological, scientific or historical. It is cosmological.

The procedure is not unlike that of a landscape painter, who first sketches in with broad strokes the background of the painting: its regions of light and darkness, of sky and water, and of earth and vegetation. Then within this context are painted birds and fish, land animals and human figures. It would be quite inappropriate for anyone to try to defend the artistic merit and meaning of the painting by attempting to show that the order in which the painting was developed was scientifically and historically "correct." That order is irrelevant to the significance of the painting as a whole and the attribution of its authorship. It is a painting of the totality. And the critical concern is to sketch in all the major regions and types of creatures, so as to leave no quarter that has not been emptied of its resident divinity, and no elements that have not been placed under the lordship of the Creator.

The Numerology of Genesis 1

In this way of organizing the material, Genesis has used a numerological structure built around the number three—a hallowed number, as is apparent in the sacred formula, "Holy, holy, holy." Three is the first number to symbolize completeness and wholeness, for which neither number one nor two is suitable. Three also symbolizes mediation and synthesis, as the third term in a triad "unites" the other two. These symbolic uses of three are evident in the way in which phenomena are organized in terms of two sets of opposite forms which are separated from one another (days 1 and 2, 4 and 5), then completed and mediated by days 3 and 6. Light
and darkness of day 1, and sky above and waters below of day 2, are completed and mediated by the earth and vegetation of day 3. The triadic movement is then repeated as the first three days are populated by the second three: the sun, moon (and stars) of the day and night skies (day 4), and the birds of the air and fish of the sea (day 5), are completed and mediated by the land animals and humans of day 6.

The ultimate mediation is then given to human beings who, while belonging to the earth and with the animals (and therefore in the "image" of the earth and the "likeness" of animals), are also created in the "image and likeness" of God. Humanity is thus placed midway between God and Nature--which has now become nature by being emptied of any intrinsic divinity. Hence the traditional theological phrasing of "Nature, Man and God." As the Psalmist in a parallel passage put it with enthusiastic exclamation:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Thou has made him little less than God} \\
\text{and dost crown him with glory and honor.} \\
\text{Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;} \\
\text{then has put all things under his feet,} \\
\text{all sheep and oxen,} \\
\text{and also the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,} \\
\text{whatever passes along the paths of the sea.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Psalm 8:5-8

This triadic structure of three sets of three points up another problem with a literal reading of the account. Literalism presumes that the numbering of days is to be understood in an arithmetical sense, whether as actual days or as epochs. This is certainly the way in which numbers are used in science, history and mathematics-and in practically all areas of modern life. But the use of numbers in ancient religious texts was often numerological rather than numerical. That is, their symbolic value was the basis and purpose for their use, not their secular value as counters. While the conversion of numerology to arithmetic was essential for the rise of modern science, historiography and mathematics, the result is that numerological symbols are reduced to signs. Numbers had to be neutralized and secularized, and com-
pletely stripped of any symbolic suggestion, in order to be utilized as digits. The principal surviving exception to this is the negative symbolism attached to the number 13, which still holds a strange power over Fridays, and over the listing of floors in hotels and high rises.

In the literal treatment of the six days of creation, a modern, arithmetical reading is substituted for the original symbolic one. This results, unwittingly, in a secular rather than religious interpretation. Not only are the symbolic associations and meanings of the text lost in the process, but the text is needlessly placed in conflict with scientific and historical readings of origins.

In order to understand the use of the imagery of days, and the numbering scheme employed, one has to think, not only cosmologically, but numerologically. One of the religious considerations involved in numbering is to make certain that any schema works out numerologically: that is, that it uses, and adds up to, the right numbers symbolically. This is distinctively different from a secular use of numbers in which the overriding concern is that numbers add up to the correct total numerically.
In this case, one of the obvious interests of the Genesis account is to correlate the grand theme of the divine work in creation with the six days of work and seventh day of rest in the Jewish week. If the Hebrews had had a five-day or a seven-day work week, the account would have read differently in a corresponding manner. Seven was a basic unit of time among West Semitic peoples, and goes back to the division of the lunar month into 4 periods of 7 days each. By the time Genesis was written, the 7-day week and the sabbath observance had been long established. Since what is being affirmed in the text is the creative work of God, it was quite natural to use the imagery of 6 days of work, with a 7th day of rest. It would surely have seemed inappropriate and jarring to have depicted the divine creative effort in a schema of, say, 5 days or 11 days.

It was important for religious reasons, not secular ones, to use a schema of seven days, and to have the work of creation completed by the end of the sixth day. "And God ceased on the seventh day from all work which he had done" (Genesis 2:2). The word "ceased" is shabat, a cognate of the term shabbat, sabbath. The "creation model" being used here is thus in no sense a scientific model, but a liturgical-calendrical model based on the sacred division of the week and the observance of sabbath. This is the religious form within which the subject of work is to be treated, even the subject of divine work.

The seven-day structure is also being used for another, not unrelated, reason. The number 7 has the numerological meaning of wholeness, plenitude, completeness. This symbolism is derived, in part, from the combination of the three major zones of the cosmos as seen vertically (heaven, earth, underworld) and the four quarters and directions of the cosmos as seen horizontally. Both the numbers 3 and 4 in themselves often function as symbols of totality, for these and other reasons. Geometrically speaking, 3 is the triangular symbol of totality, and 4 is the rectangular symbol (in its perfect form as the square). But what would be more "total" would be to combine the vertical and horizontal planes. Thus the number 7 (adding 3 and 4) and the number 12 (multiplying them) are recurrent biblical symbols of fullness and perfection: 7 golden candlesticks, 7 spirits, 7 words of praise, 7
churches, the 7th year, the 49th year, the 70 elders, forgiveness 70 times 7, etc. Even Leviathan, that dread dragon of the abyss, was represented in Canaanite myth as having 7 heads—the "complete" monster.

Such positive meanings are now being applied by Genesis to a celebration of the whole of creation, and of the parenthesis of sabbath rest. The liturgically repeated phrase "And God saw that it was good," which appears after each day of creation, and the final capping phrase "And behold it was very good," are paralleled and underlined by being placed in a structure that is climaxed by a 7th day. The 7th day itself symbolizes its completeness and "very-goodness."

The account also makes use of the corresponding symbol of wholeness and totality: 12. Two sets of phenomena are assigned to each of the 6 days of creation, thus totalling 12. In this manner the numerological symbolism of completion and fulfillment is associated with the work of creation, as well as the rest from it on the 7th day. The totality of nature is created by God, is good, and is to be celebrated both daily and in special acts of worship and praise on the Sabbath day. The words "six" and "seven" are themselves words of praise: six expressing praise for creation and work; seven for sabbath and rest.

Uses of the number 12, like 7, abound throughout the Bible. Not only is there a miscellany of references to 12 pillars, 12 springs, 12 precious stones, 12 gates, 12 fruits, 12 pearls, etc., but it was important also to identify 12 tribes of Israel, as well as 12 tribes of Ishmael, and later the 12 districts of Solomon, as well as Jesus' 12 disciples.

Though in the modern world numbers have become almost completely secularized, in antiquity they could function as significant vehicles of meaning and power. It was important to associate the right numbers with one's life and activity, and to avoid the wrong numbers. To do so was to surround and fill one's existence with the positive meanings and powers which numbers such as 3, 4, 7 and 12 conveyed. In this way one gave religious significance to life, and placed one's existence in harmony with the divine order of the cosmos. By aligning and synchronizing the microcosm of one's individual and family life, and the mesocosm of one's society and state, with the macrocosm itself, life was tuned to the larger rhythms of this sacred order.
For twentieth century, western societies the overriding consideration in the use of numbers is their secular value in addition, subtraction, division and multiplication. We must therefore have numbers that are completely devoid of all symbolic associations. Numbers such as 7 and 12 do not make our calculators or computers function any better, nor does the number 13 make them any less efficient. Our numbers are uniform, value-neutral "meaningless" and "powerless."

What is critical to modern consciousness is to have the right numbers in the sense of having the right figures and right count. This sense, of course, was also present in the ancient world: in commerce, in construction, in military affairs, in taxation. But there was also a higher, symbolic use of numbers. In a religious context, it was more important to have the right numbers in a sacred rather than profane sense. While we give the highest value, and nearly exclusive value, to
numbers as carriers of arithmetic "facts," in religious texts and rituals the highest value was often given to numbers as carriers of ultimate truth and reality.

Those, therefore, who would attempt to impose a literal reading of numbers upon Genesis, as if the sequence of days was of the same order as counting sheep or merchandise or money, are offering a modern, secular interpretation of a sacred text—in the name of religion. And, as if this were not distortion enough, they proceed to place this secular reading of origins in competition with other secular readings and secular literatures: scientific, historical, mathematical, technological. Extended footnotes are appended to the biblical texts on such extraneous subjects as the Second Law of Thermodynamics, radiometric dating, paleontology, sedimentation, hydrology, etc. These are hardly the issues with which Genesis is concerning itself, or is exercised over.

Phenomenal Language

Since Genesis is teaching creation over against procreation, and monotheism over against polytheism, it cannot be said to be teaching science, or any one form of science over against any other. Insofar as Genesis deals with relationships within nature, it does so in a phenomenal manner: as things appear to ordinary observation. Genesis is not in the business of teaching a "young earth" theory of sudden creation in 6 literal 24-hour days. Nor is it teaching some form of "progressive creation" with a mix of fiat creation and epochs of gradual development. Nor is it teaching "theistic evolution" or "pantheistic evolution" or "panentheistic evolution." It does not teach any of these views of science and natural history because it is not using language in that way, for that purpose, or out of that concern.

If scientists wish to take such positions on their own, it is certainly within their province and right as scientists to do so, and to debate such positions within scientific forums. But it should not be done for religious reasons, or motivated by a supposed greater fidelity to the Bible. Nor should anyone presume that such efforts in any way confirm or deny biblical teaching. It is a linguistic confusion to try to argue that any of these scientific positions, or any other scientific positions, past, present or forthcoming, represent the biblical position, and can therefore be questioned by science, verified by science, or falsified by science.

A prime example of this confusion is the energy expended by certain biologists in construing the frequent reference to
reproducing "each according to its kind" as a statement concerning biological species and speciation. The phrasing is repeated 10 times in Genesis 1 with reference to vegetation, birds, sea creatures and land animals. If one may take this to be a biological statement, then it would be appropriate to introduce extended discussion of fixity of species, genetic mutations, natural selection, missing links, stratigraphic evidence, and the like. If not, then the discussion, however interesting and important, is beside the point. And it is not. The repeated stress upon "kinds" is not a biological or genetic statement. It is a cosmological statement. While that may appear to modern interpreters very much like a biological statement, it is actually a different "species" of statement that cannot be "cross-bred" with scientific statements. The type of species-confusion involved here is not that of biological species but linguistic species!

Since cosmologies are concerned with the establishment and maintenance of order in the cosmos, central to the achievement of order is the act of separating things from one another. Without acts of separation, one would have chaos. Thus ancient cosmologies commonly begin with a depiction of a chaotic state, where there are no clear lines of demarcation, and then proceed to indicate ways in which the present world-order (cosmos) with its lines of demarcation has been organized. In other cultures this was achieved by divine births, wars, etc. Here cosmos is accomplished by separating things out from one another, and by creating other things (e.g., light or firmament) that aid in the separation. Everything is thus assigned its proper region, allowing it to have its own identity, place and function in the overall scheme. The imagery used in Genesis 1, in fact, is drawn largely from the political sphere. It is that of a divine sovereign, issuing commands, organizing territories, and governing the cosmic kingdom.

In Genesis 1 the inanimate features of the first four days are achieved by being "separated" or "gathered together." On the first day "God separated the light from the darkness." On the second day "God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament." On the third day God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And on the fourth day God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night." The same theme is then pursued on the third, fifth and
sixth days in dealing with plant and animal life. "Each according to its kind" is a continuation on the animate level of the acts of separation on the inanimate level. The process is then climaxed by the creation of human beings who are granted their unique place in the cosmos by being separated from the rest of the animals by virtue of being in the image and likeness of God, yet at the same time separated from God as creatures of divine creation.

Beyond this general cosmological concern to attribute all types of beings, and all types of order, to the creation and control of God, there is no specific interest in or reference to what we might recognize as a biological statement on species, genera, phyla, etc., or a geological statement on the history of water and earth, or an astronomical statement on the relationship between sun, moon, stars and earth. The language used is phenomenal and popular, not scientific and technical. As John Calvin wisely noted, early in the growing controversies over religion and science: "Nothing is here treated of but the visible form of the world. He who would learn astronomy and the other recondite arts, let him go elsewhere."¹

This observation on biblical usage is very important for the doctrine of revelation. The biblical message offers itself as a universal message. It is addressed to all human beings, whatever their knowledge or lack of it. It is therefore couched in a form that employs the universal appearances of things
The narrative form of Genesis 1, which anyone anywhere can identify with. As Calvin also states: "Moses does not speak with philosophical (i.e., scientific) acuteness on occult mysteries, but states those things which are everywhere observed, even by the uncultivated, and which are in common use." Thus when Genesis 1 discusses the "separating" or "gathering" of inanimate forces, these are not astronomical or geological terms, but cosmological ones, which draw upon everyday observations of nature. Similarly, the word "kind" (min) is not functioning as a genetic term, but describes the animate order as it is perceived in ordinary experience. Biblical statements in all these areas are the equivalent of phenomenal statements still commonly in use, despite centuries of astronomy, such as "sunrise" and "sunset."

Calvin pointed out, for example, that the biblical statement—if construed as a scientific statement—that the sun and moon are the two great lights of the heavens, cannot be reconciled with astronomy, since "the star of Saturn, which, on account of its great distance, appears the least of all, is greater than the moon." And, as we now know, there are many suns greater than our sun. But, Calvin insisted, "Moses wrote in a popular style things which, without instruction, all ordinary persons, endued with common sense, are able to understand." Similarly, in his commentary on the reference to the two "great lights" in Psalm 136, Calvin affirmed that "the Holy Spirit had no intention to teach astronomy; and in proposing instruction meant to be common to the simplest and most uneducated persons, he made use by Moses and the other prophets of popular language that none might shelter himself under the pretext of obscurity."

As Francis Bacon perceptively argued in 1605, addressing the apparent flat earth teaching of the Bible, there are two books of God: "the book of God's Word" and "the book of God's Works." These books, however, must not be confused in their nature, language and purpose. We must not, Bacon warned, "unwisely mingle or confound these learnings together." Religion and science are not necessarily running a collision course along the same track, except when someone mistakenly switches them onto the same track. Religious language and scientific language intersect at many points, to be sure, as they touch upon many of the same issues and realities. But they do not move along the same plane of
inquiry and discourse. They intersect at something more like right angles.

Science, as it were, moves along a horizontal plane, with its steadfast attention to immediate causes and naturalistic explanations for phenomena. Religion moves along a vertical plane that intersects this horizontal plane from beginning to end and not just in certain "gaps" which are defended so as to make room for God at intermittent points along the line. Science, with its eyes focussed on the dimensions of the horizontal plane, tends to have a naturalistic bias, and to see all experience and knowing, and all affirmation, as reducible to this plane. Religion, however, adds another dimension, a supernatural dimension, which it insists intersects this horizontal plane at every moment, and in fact is the ultimate source of its being, meaning and direction. It is a dimension which, along its vertical axis, is both transcendent and immanent. It is simultaneously present with the natural, and without it the natural does not exist. But it is not reducible to the natural, nor is language about it reducible to natural forms.

If one wishes to argue for deeper meanings and mysteries in scripture, they are certainly there. But they are not scientific in character. They are theological and spiritual. They are not meanings and mysteries hidden from the ancients, but now revealed to 20th century scientists, which lie along the horizontal plane. They are rather inexhaustible depths of meaning and mystery which lie along the vertical plane. "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.... For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Romans 11:33, 36).

NOTES
2. Ibid., p. 84.
3. Ibid., p. 85.
4. Ibid., p. 86.

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The Promised Land:
A Biblical-Historical View

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

In the Old Testament few issues are as important as that of the promise of the land to the patriarchs and the nation Israel. In fact, גן, "land," is the fourth most frequent substantive in the Hebrew Bible.1 Were it not for the larger and more comprehensive theme of the total promise2 with all its multifaceted provisions, the theme of Israel and her land could well serve as the central idea or the organizing rubric for the entire canon. However, it does hold a dominant place in the divine gifts of blessing to Israel.

Yet there is more to the promise of the land than religious significance and theological meaning; an essential interrelationship exists between the political and empirical reality of the land as a Jewish state and all biblical statements about its spiritual or theological functions. The land of Israel cannot be reduced to a sort of mystical land defined as a new spiritual reality which transcends the old geographic and political designations if one wishes to continue to represent the single truth-intentions3 of the writers of the biblical text. Instead, the Bible is most insistent on the fact that the land was promised to the patriarchs as a gift where their descendants would reside and rule as a nation.

The Land as Promise

The priority of the divine Word and divine oath as the basis for any discussion of the land is of first importance. From the
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inception of God's call to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, God had marked out a specific geographical destination for him (Gen. 12:1). This territorial bequest was immediately reaffirmed and extended to his descendants as soon as Abraham reached Shechem (Gen. 12:7).

Thus Alt was certainly wrong in rejecting the land as a part of the original promise. Noth was closer to the mark when he declared that the promise of both the land and the seed was part of the original covenant to the patriarchs.4

So solemn was this covenant with its gift of the land5 that Genesis 15:7-21 depicted God alone moving between the halves of the sacrificial animals after sunset as "a smoking furnace and a flaming torch" (v. 17; all translations are the author's unless noted otherwise). Thus He obligated Himself and only Himself to fulfill the terms of this oath. Abraham was not asked or required likewise to obligate himself. The total burden for the delivery of the gift of the land fell on the divine Provider but not on the devotion of the patriarch. As if to underscore the permanence of this arrangement, Genesis 17:7, 13, 19 stress that this was to be a דָּבֶּרֶת עַל לֵאמֶר, "an everlasting covenant."

**Boundaries of the Land**

The borders of this land promised to Abraham were to run "from the River Egypt [מֵי יָהֳעַנָּן] to the Great River, the River Euphrates" [חֹקֵר נַחֲלָי נְהָרָה פְּכוּת] (Gen. 15:18). Or in the later words of the oft-repeated pairs of cities, the land included everything "from Dan to Beersheba" (Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:2, 15; 1 Kings 4:25 [Heb. 5:5]; and in reverse order, 2 Chron. 30:5). These two cities marked the northernmost and southernmost administrative centers rather than sharply defined boundary lines.

Even though a number of evangelical scholars have wrongly judged the southern boundary of the "River Egypt" to be the Nile River,6 it is more accurately placed at the Wadi el-'Arish which reaches the Mediterranean Sea at the town of El-'Arish, some ninety miles east of the Suez Canal and almost fifty miles southwest of Gaza (cf. Num. 34:2, 5, Ezek. 47:14, 19; 48:28). Amos 6:14 likewise pointed to the same limits for the southern boundary: the "brook of the Arabah" (נֵבֶל הַעֲרָבָה) which flows into the southern tip of the Dead Sea. Other marks on the same southern boundary are the end of the Dead Sea (Num. 34:3-5),
Mount Halak (Josh. 11:17), the Wilderness of Zin (Num. 13:21), Arabah (Deut. 1:7), Negeb (Deut. 34:1-3), and "Shihor opposite Egypt" (Josh. 13:3-5; 1 Chron. 13:5).7

The western boundary of the land was "the Sea of the Philistines," that is, the "Great Sea" (Num. 34:6; Josh. 1:4; Ezek. 47:20; 48:28) or Mediterranean Sea, while the eastern boundary was the eastern shore of the Sea of Kinnereth, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea (Num. 34:7-12).

Only the northern boundary presented a serious problem. The river that bordered off the northernmost reaches of the promised land was called "the great river" which was later glossed, according to some, to read "the River Euphrates" in Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7; and Joshua 1:4. In Exodus 23:31 it is simply "the river."

But is the Euphrates River to be equated with the Great River? Could it not be that these are the two extremities of the northern boundary? This suggestion proves to have some weight in that the other topographical notices given along with these two river names would appear to be more ideally located in the valley which currently serves as the boundary between Lebanon and Syria. The river running through this valley is called in modern Arabic Nahr el-Kebir, "the great river."

One of the most difficult topographical features to isolate is the "plain of Labwah [or ‘toward, in the coming to’] Hamath" (Num. 13:21), or just simply Labwah Hamath (Num. 34:8; Josh. 13:3-5; 1 Kings 8:65; 2 Kings 14:25; 1 Chron. 13:5; Amos 6:18; Ezek. 47:15; 48:1-28). Mazar (Maisler) has identified "Labwah Hamath" or "toward Hamath" as the modern city of Labwah in Lebanon. This city, in a forest just to the south of Kadesh and northeast of Baalbek, was of sufficient stature to be mentioned in Amenhotep II's stele, as Rameses II's favorite hunting grounds8 and in Tiglath-pileser III's text along with Hamath. Numbers 13:21 seems to point to the same "plain" (빼ור), a district further defined by 2 Samuel 10:6, 8 and Judges 18:28.

Added to this site are Mount Hor (which may be the same as Mount Akkar), just south of the "great river" in Lebanon; and the towns of Zedad, Ziphron, Hazer Ainon (all referred to in Num. 34:3-9; cf. Ezek. 47:15-19; 48:1-2, 28), and Riblah (Ezek. 6:14). All these towns may be bearers of names similar to some Arabic village names today, for example: Riblah, Sadad, Qousseir (= Hazer) or Qaryatein (Hazer Spring).9
While the precise details on the northern border remain extremely tentative, the evidence favors some line far to the north of Dan which would include old Canaanite settlements such as Sidon (Gen. 10:15) and indeed the whole Phoenician coastal section from Sidon to the Philistine Gaza (Gen. 10:19).

Meanwhile, the settlement of Transjordania by the two and one-half tribes seems to be clearly outside that territory originally promised to Israel. Joshua 22:24-25 clearly implies that Gilead was outside the borders of Canaan and the portion allotted by promise. The same implication is sustained in Lot's removal to Transjordania's Sodom (Gen. 13:12) and in the instructions Moses gave to Reuben and Gad: "We will cross over ... into the land of Canaan, and the possession of our inheritance shall remain with us across the Jordan" (Num. 32:32, NASB). Even when three of the six cities of refuge were assigned to Transjordania, they were distinguished from the three that were "in the land of Canaan" (Num. 35:14). Thus the most that could be said for Israel's occupation of these lands on the eastern bank of the Jordan is that it was a temporary occupation but that they did not belong to the land of promise. Likewise the Negeb in the south was also outside the parameters of the promise.

The Land as the Gift of God

Leviticus 25:23, in a context dealing with the Year of Jubilee, declares that the owner of the land is none other than the Lord. Indeed the God of Israel is the Giver of whatever the land yields (Deut. 6:10-11). Thus one of the central theological affirmations about the land is that it is the gift of God to Israel. Eighteen times the Book of Deuteronomy refers to the promise of the land made with the patriarchs, and all but three of these eighteen references emphasize the fact that He likewise "gave" it to them. 10

This land was "a good land" (Deut. 1:25, 35; 3:23; 4:21-22; 6:18; 8:7, 10; 9:6; 11:17), for it was filled with brooks, springs, wheat, barley, grapes, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, honey, iron, and copper.

Yet what God gave He then termed Israel's "inheritance" (הֶגֶּן). It was "the good land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance" (Deut. 4:21; cf. 4:38; 12:9; 15:4; 19:10; 20:16; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1). Thus the Owner of all lands (Ps. 24:1) allotted to Israel the land of Canaan as their special "inheritance."
Whereas the land had been granted to the patriarchs by virtue of the divine Word and oath, it was still theirs in theory and not in actuality. For over half a millennium it was only the land of their sojournings; they did not as yet possess it. Then under Joshua's conquest the ancient promise was to be made a reality.

Since the land was a "gift," as Deuteronomy affirmed in some twenty-five references (Deut. 1:20, 25; 2:29; 3:20; 4:40; 5:16; et passim), Israel had but to "possess" (ḇāyāḵ) it (Deut. 3:19; 5:31; 12:1; 15:4; 19:2, 14; 25:19). This does not mean that the idea of taking the land by force or conquest was contradictory to the idea of its bestowal as a gift.11 As Miller correctly reconciled the situation, God's overthrow of the enemy would be the way in which He would finally allow Israel to take possession of the land.12 The two notions come together in the expression, "The land which Yahweh gives you to possess."

If it be objected, as it surely has, that such action on God's part is pure chauvinism and unfair partiality, it should be remembered that Deuteronomy had already spoken of the same divine replacement of former inhabitants in Transjordania. The Emim, Horites, and Zamzummim had been divinely dispossessed and destroyed (Deut. 2:9, 12, 21) and their lands had been sovereignly given to Moab, Edom, and Ammon. The comparison of their situation with Israel's had not been missed by the writer (2:12). In fact Amos 9:7 reviews several other exoduses Yahweh had conducted in the past: the Philistines from Crete and the Syrians from Kir of Mesopotamia, not to mention the Ethiopians.

Accordingly, as the conquest came to an end, what the patriarchs had enjoyed solely in the form of promissory words except for a burial plot or two was now to be totally possessed.13 Yet this introduced another enigma, namely, the gap between the gift of the whole land and the reality of Israel's partial conquest and control of the land. On the one hand Yahweh promised to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan "little by little" (ḥātam ṭāmiyāṯ) (Exod. 23:30-33), and Joshua made war "a long time" (hürāʾ ḥēḏim) (Josh. 11:18). On the other hand the Canaanites were destroyed "quickly" (ḥātam) (Deut. 7:22; 9:3).14 Furthermore not only is the speed with which the conquest was completed an issue; but also the extent of the conquest is a problem (cf. Josh. 12:10-23 with 15:63; 17:12; Judg. 1:21-22, 29). But the contrasting statements on the speed of the conquest are relative only to the magnitude of the work that was to be done. Where the conquest
is presented as *fait accompli*, it is so from the standpoint of the territory having been generally secured from the theocratic perspective (even though there were many pockets of resistance that needed to be flushed out and some sites that needed to be recaptured several times since the fortunes of warfare tended to seesaw back and forth as positions frequently changed hands).

Nevertheless the inheritance remained as a gift even when the actual possession of the land lagged far behind the promise. An identical conundrum can be found by comparing the various provisions for "rest" ( Heb. Exod. 33:14: הָעֵנָה, Deut. 12:9) in the "place" that the Lord had chosen to "plant" His people. Whereas Israel had not yet come to the "resting place" and to the inheritance of the land (Deut. 12:9), by the time Joshua had completed his administration "The LORD [had given] them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers .... Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed: all came to pass" (Josh. 21:44-45, NASB).

Why then, it might be asked, was David still expecting this rest as a future hope (2 Sam. 7:10-11)? And why was Solomon, that "man of rest," expecting it (1 Kings 8:56; 1 Chron. 22:9)? The solution to this matter is that even the emphasis of Joshua in 21:44-45 was on the *promised word* which had not failed Israel, nor would it. But whether any given generation has remained in the land has depended on whether it has set a proper value on God's promised inheritance.

Such conditionality did not "pave the way for a declension from grace into law," as von Rad suggested; neither does the conditional aspect of any single generation's participation in the blessings offered in the Davidic covenant contradict the eternality of their promises. The "if" notices in this covenant (1 Kings 2:4; 8:25; 9:4-5; Pss. 89:29-32: 132:12; cf. 2 Sam. 7:14-15) referred only to any future generation's participation in the benefits of the covenant, but they did not affect the transmission or the certainty of God's eternal oath. The ownership of the land (as a gift from God) is certain and eternal, but the occupation of it by any given generation is conditioned on obedience.

Therefore neither the days of Joshua nor those of David could be used as a kind of blank check for any subsequent generation to rest on their fathers' laurels. Indeed, the word of promise could also be theirs, if they would enter not only into the material resting place, but if they too would appropriate that rest by faith as did Caleb and Joshua (Ps. 95:7-11; cf. Rom. 9-11).
Loss of the Land

The history and theology of the land divides right at this point. In the succinct vocabulary of Brueggemann,\(^{18}\) the Jordan is "the juncture between two histories." In the one "history is one of *landlessness on the way to the land*" and in the other it is "*landed Israel in the process of losing the land.*" Thus the *sine qua non* for continued enjoyment of life in the land is obedience that springs from a genuine love and fear of God. Failure to obey could lead to war, calamity, loss of the land, or death itself (Deut. 4:26).

Many of the laws were tied directly to the land and Israel's existence on it, as indicated by the motive clauses or introductory words found in many of them.\(^{19}\) In fact when evil was left unchecked and was compounded, it caused the land to be defiled and guilty before God (Deut. 21:23; 24:4). This point could not have been made more forcefully than it is in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Naturally no nation or individual has the right to interpret any single or isolated reverse or major calamity in life as an evidence of divine love which is seeking the normalization of relationships between God and man. Yet Israel's prophets were bold to declare with the aid of divine revelation that certain events, especially those in related series, were indeed from the hand of God (e.g., Amos 4:6-12 and Hag. 1:4-7).

The most painful of all the tragedies would be the loss of the land (Lev. 26:34-39). But such a separation could never be a permanent situation; how could God deny Himself and fail to fulfill His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Lev. 26:42)? As surely as the judgments might "overtake" (Deut. 28:15, 43; cf. Zech. 1:6) future generations, just as surely would every promised blessing likewise "overtake" (Deut. 28:2) them the moment "repentance" (יוו) began (Deut. 30:2, 6, 8, 10; cf. Zech. 1:6).\(^{20}\) Forsaking the covenant the Lord made with the fathers would lead to an uprooted existence (Deut. 30:24-28) until God once more restored the fortunes of Israel.

The Prophets and the Promise of a Return

The "headwaters" of the "return" promises, as Martens states in one of the first studies of land theology in the prophets,\(^{21}\) are in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Both of these men had experienced firsthand the loss of land; yet together they contain twenty-five
explicit statements about return to the land and five texts with indirect announcements of return.

Jeremiah's characteristic formula for the restoration of Israel to the land is "restore the fortunes (or captivity)" (תבשש). Twelve of its twenty-six occurrences in the Old Testament are found in Jeremiah (e.g., 29:14; 30:3; 32:44). Ezekiel on the other hand usually casts his message in a three-part formula (e.g., Ezek. 11:17; 20:41-42; 36:24; 37:21): (a) "I will bring (Hiphil of ק辅导员) you from the people"; (b) "I will gather (Piel of ק辅导员) you from the lands"; (c) "I will bring (Hiphil of ק辅导员) you into the land of Israel."  

In one of the most striking passages in the prophets, Yahweh pledges that His promise to restore Israel's fortunes (Jer. 33:26) will be as dependable and as certain as His covenant with day and night (33:20, 25).  

While the sheer multiplicity of texts from almost every one of the prophets is staggering, a few evangelicals insist that this pledge to restore Israel to her land was fulfilled when Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah led their respective returns from the Babylonian Exile. But if the postexilic returns to the land fulfilled this promised restoration predicted by the prophets, why then did Zechariah continue to announce a still future return (10:8-12) in words that were peppered with the phrases and formulas of such prophecies as Isaiah 11:11 and Jeremiah 50:19?

Such a return of the nation Israel to the land could come only from a literal worldwide assemblage of Jews from "the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:12). The God who promised to bring spiritual and immaterial blessings will also fulfill the material, secular, and political blessings in order to demonstrate that He is indeed Lord of the whole earth and all that is in it.

The question as to whether the return follows a national spiritual awakening and turning to the Lord or vice versa is difficult. Sometimes the prophets seem to favor the first, as in Deuteronomy 30, and sometimes it appears that the return precedes any general repentance, as in Ezekiel 36:1-37:14 and perhaps in Isaiah 11. But there can be no question about a future return in any of the prophets.

The New Testament and the Promise of the Land

For Paul, no one of the previous promises has changed—not even the promise of the land. Since the Old Testament has an
authority equal to that of the New Testament, the permanency and directness of the promise of the land to Israel cannot be contravened by anything allegedly taught in the New Testament. Tal is wide of the mark when he summarizes the view that the Old Testament can be set aside now that the New Testament era has dawned. He holds that all geopolitical rights promised in the old covenant have been cancelled and that the best that Israel can hope for now is to be part of the new people of God, the church, but without nationality, land, or statehood. But such a view does not square with either the Old covenant or the New covenant.

The most significant passage on this subject in the New Testament is Romans 9-11, especially 11:11-36. For Paul, Israel's restoration to the favor and blessing of God must come in "full number" or as the RSV puts it, "full inclusion" (πλήρωμα, Rom. 11:12; cf. πλήρωμα τῶν ἑθνῶν in 11:25). Thus Israel is and remains God's link to her own future as well as the link to the future of the nations. For if her temporary loss of land and failures have fallen out to the spiritual advantage of the world and their reconciliation to God, her acceptance will signal her "life from the dead" (11:15).

"And so all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26) in accordance with the predictions of Isaiah 27:9 and 59:20-21. The "and so" (καὶ οὐτως) probably points back to verse 25 and the "mystery" of the temporary failure of Israel until the full number of the Gentiles comes in (cf. Luke 21:24). Then, in that future moment, "all Israel will be saved" πᾶς Ἰσραήλ σωθήσεται. This is not a matter of individual salvation nor a matter of converting to a Gentile brand of Christendom, but it is a matter of God's activity in history when the nation shall once again, as in the days of blessing in the past, experience the blessing and joy of God spiritually, materially, geographically, and politically.

The main lines of Paul's argument in Romans 9-11 are clear and in complete agreement with the promise of the land to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Therefore one ought not detract from or minimize the full force of this blunt witness to God's everlasting work on behalf of Israel. For herein lies one of the greatest philosophies of history ever produced: Israel is God's watermark on secular history that simultaneously demonstrates that He can complete in time and space what He promised to do and that He, the Owner and Ruler of all nations, geography, and magistrates, will deal severely with those nations that mock, deride, parcel up, and attack Israel (e.g., Joel 3:1-5). Those that
attempt to do so either in the name of the church or the name of political and economic expediency will answer to the God of Israel.

Yes, Israel is the "navel" of the earth (Ezek. 38:12; cf. 5:5) in more ways than one. The mark of God's new measure of grace, not only to Israel as a nation but also to all the nations and Gentiles at large, will be Israel's return to the land and enjoyment of it in the millennium.

Notes
2 For a discussion which organizes the total message of the Bible around the promise, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Toward an Old Testament Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978).
7 Simons argues that Shihor is not a branch of the Nile, the old Pelusiac or easternmost branch of the Nile - which is never a לֵבֹנ according to K. A. Kitchen ("Egypt, Brook of," Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975):224-25), but is the Wadi el-Arish (Simons, Geographical and Topographical Texts, p. 104).
26:8 of sufficient weight to offset this interpretation, or is it merely an imitation of the older הַר הָֽרִים as Simons argues (Geographical and Topographical Texts, p. 101)?
13 For further development of this thought see Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, pp. 124-36.
17 See Kaiser, Toward an Old Testament Theology, pp. 61-66, 92-94.
24 Ibid., pp. 164-72.
26 But see the brilliant essay by Shermayahu Talmon, "The 'Navel of the Earth' and the Comparative Method," in Scripture in History and Theology: Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam, eds. Arthur L. Merrill and Thomas W. Overholt (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1977), pp. 243-68. He concluded that הַר הָרִים does not mean a mountain peak that serves as the center of all the surrounding landscape, but that it is a plateau, a level plain nested on a mountain. The Septuagint δέσμων ὁμορράξ, "navel," is unwarranted when judged by biblical and contextual considerations.
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THERE are no signs that the debate over the chronological

data of Genesis 1 is abating. Among those who hold
biblical views of the inspiration of the Scriptures certain
interpretations of that chronology have, indeed, long been
traditional. These may disagree as to the duration of the
"days" of Genesis 1 but they have in common the opinion that
the order of narration in that chapter coincides with the actual
sequence of creation history. Although these traditional inter-
pretations continue to be dominant in orthodox circles there
also continues to be debate and its flames have recently been
vigorously fanned by the bellows of the dissenters.¹

At the heart of the issue, though its crucial character ap-
pears to be generally overlooked is the question of whether
the modus operandi of divine providence was the same during
the creation era as that of ordinary providence now. This is
not to raise the question of whether Genesis 1 leaves the door
open for some sort of evolutionary reconstruction. On the
contrary, it is assumed here that Genesis 1 contradicts the
idea that an undifferentiated world-stuff evolved into the
present variegated universe by dint of intrinsic potentialities
whether divinely "triggered" or otherwise. According to
Genesis 1, the divine act of absolute beginning--or creation
in nihilum--was followed by a succession of divine acts of
origination, both ex nihilo and intra aliquid.² The present

¹ Two discussions in particular have evoked animated reactions among
evangelicals in this country: B. Ramm, The Christian View of Science and
Scripture (Grand Rapids, 1954), pp. 173 ff. and N. H. Ridderbos, Is There
A Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science? (Grand Rapids, 1957).
² In nihilum serves to distinguish the initial creative act as alone having
had no setting of prior created reality. Intra aliquid has the advantage
over ex materia (for productions like that of Adam's body out of existent
dust) that it does not obscure the pure creativeness of the divine act. There
should be no hesitation in classifying such works as creation in the strict
sense. The opinion that Calvin refused to do so is mistaken. (Cf. the
criticism of B. B. Warfield on this point by J. Murray in "Calvin's Doctrine
world with the fulness thereof is the net result of this succession of discrete creation acts of God completed within the era of the "six days" (Gen. 2:1-3). 3

Though this closed era of the "six days" was characteristically the era of creation, it was not exclusively so. That is, the works of creation were interlaced with the work of providence --in a manner analogous to the mingling of natural and supernatural providence in the structure of subsequent history. 4

As a matter of fact, one aspect of the creative acts themselves (excepting the act of absolute beginning) may properly be subsumed under the rubric of providence. They were works of providence in that they were part of the divine government of the world in so far as that world was already existent before each new creative act occurred. In the discussion which follows, however, predications made concerning the modus of Creation", *WTJ* XVII, 1954, pp. 29 ff.). Calvin does on occasion insist that the word "create" be restricted to *ex nihilo* fiat. Thus, in commenting on the use of the word "create" in Gen. 1:21 for the origin of creatures of sea and air, which Calvin interprets (mistakenly) as having involved the use of existent water, he accounts for this usage solely on the ground that the material employed belonged to the universal matter created *ex nihilo* on the first "day". However, in such a passage it must be observed that Calvin is exclusively concerned with the precise meaning of the Hebrew word רָאָה not at all with the general theological use of the word "create".

3 There have been acts of creation since the creation of man which terminated the era of the "six days"; cf., e.g., the origin of souls and such miracles as the multiplying of the loaves and fishes. None of these, however, has added to the "kinds" originated within the "six days".

4 Cf. B. B. Warfield, "Christian Supernaturalism" in *Studies in Theology* (New York, 1932), pp. 37 ff. The likeness of creation acts to subsequent supernatural acts is profound. They are alike highways to consummation. It is by the road of his successive creation acts that God has betaken himself to the Sabbath of the seventh "day". In the sequel, it is by the way of supernaturalism that God directs his image-bearer to union with him in his consummation rest. Adam wakes to the supernatural voice and it is to him from the very beginning a voice that speaks to him out of God's Sabbath, challenging him with the invitation, "Come up hither"--to consummation. And every supernatural word thereafter issues from and beckons covenant-man unto that same Sabbath dwelling-place of God, while every supernatural work propels him towards it. The redemptive principle becomes necessary in the supernaturalism that conducts fallen man to consummation rest and it is, therefore, prominent in biblical revelation; but it is nevertheless subordinate to the eschatological thrust that marks all supernaturalism.
operandi of divine providence during the creation era will have in view only the work of God other than his acts of creation.

The traditionalist interpreter, as he pursues his strictly chronological way through the data of Genesis 1, will be compelled at one point or another to assume that God in his providential preservation of the world during the "six days" era did not operate through secondary means in the manner which men now daily observe and analyze as natural law. The question, therefore, is whether the Scriptures justify this traditional assumption of supernatural providence for the creation era or whether they contradict it—or whether possibly they leave it an open question. 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 interpretation.

GENESIS 2:5ff.

The major English versions exhibit marked divergence in the way they translate Gen. 2:5 and relate it grammatically to verses 4 and 6-7.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Authorized</th>
<th>American Revised</th>
<th>Revised Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>(4) These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, (5) and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. (6) But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (7) And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground ...</td>
<td>(4) These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven. (5) And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground; (6) but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (7) And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground ...</td>
<td>(4) These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, (5) when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up— for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; (6) but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground and Jehovah God formed man of dust from the ground ...</td>
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Of these versions the treatment of verse 5 in the ARV is alone acceptable. A Hebrew idiom for expressing an emphatic negative found in the original of this verse has been muffed by the AV with the result that it is obscure at best. The RSV like the ARV correctly renders the negative element but has other serious defects. It treats verse 5 as though it were part of an involved temporal section extending from 4b through 6, all subordinated to the action of verse 7. This is an old interpretation which Delitzsch properly rejected because it required "a clumsy interpolated period" such as is "not to be expected in this simple narrative style". The RSV rendering would also compel Genesis 2 to teach that man was created before vegetation, whereas the ARV permits the exegete to regard the arrangement of its contents as topical rather than chronological. If the arrangement of Genesis 2 were not topical it would contradict the teaching of Genesis 1 (not to mention that of natural revelation) that vegetation preceded man on the earth.

Set against the vast background of creation history, these verses serve to bring together man and the vegetable world in the foreground of attention. This prepares for the central role of certain objects of the vegetable kingdom, i.e., the Garden of God and especially the trees in the midst of it, in the earliest history of man as recorded in the immediately following verses (cf. 2:8ff. and 3:1ff.).

Verse 5 itself describes a time when the earth was without vegetation. And the significant fact is a very simple one. It is the fact that an explanation--a perfectly natural explanation - is given for the absence of vegetation at that time: "for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth". The Creator did not originate plant life on earth before he had prepared an environment in which he might preserve it without by-passing secondary means and without having recourse to extraordinary means such as marvellous methods of fertilization. The unargued presupposition of Gen. 2:5 is clearly that the divine providence was operating during the

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6 That much is deducible from Gen. 1:26-30 whatever one's view of the chronological character of the order of narration in Genesis 1 as a whole.
creation period through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day.

The last clause of verse 5 cites as a second reason for the lack of vegetation the absence of men. Though there be no rainfall, if man is present "to till the ground" and, in particular, to construct a system of artificial irrigation, he can make the desert blossom as the rose. The effect of this last clause of Gen. 2:5 is to confirm and strengthen the principle that normal providential procedure characterized the creation era.

Verses 6 and 7 then correspond respectively to the two clauses in verse 5b and relate how the environmental deficiencies there cited were remedied. First, "flooding waters"...
began to rise from the earth and watered all the face of the ground" (v. 6). Here was a source of natural irrigation to compensate for the want of rain. The first verb is a Hebrew imperfect and the inceptive nuance--"began to"--is legitimate for that form and is required in this case if verse 6 is not to neutralize the first clause in verse 5b. The English versions of verse 6 convey the impression that there was an ample watering of the earth during the very time which verse 5 describes. If that were so, the explanatory statement of verse 5, "for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth", would be stranded as an irrelevance. Actually, verse 6 reports the emergence of a new natural phenomenon, the necessary preliminary to the creation of the florae described in verse 5a.

Verse 7 then records the creation of man. With adequate natural irrigation already available, the mere preservation of vegetation does not require man's husbandry. But its full horticultural exploitation does. Besides, the mention of man at this point need not be accounted for solely in terms of his services to the vegetable kingdom for he was not made for it but it for him.

GENESIS 2:5ff. AND THE INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 1

Embedded in Gen. 2:5ff. is the principle that the modus operandi of the divine providence was the same during the creation period as that of ordinary providence at the present time. It is now to be demonstrated that those who adopt the traditional approaches cannot successfully integrate this revelation with Genesis 1 as they interpret it.

In contradiction to Gen. 2:5, the twenty-four-hour day theory must presuppose that God employed other than the ordinary secondary means in executing his works of providence. To take just one example, it was the work of the "third day" that the waters should be gathered together into

Mari texts as the name of the river god) or from Ida, the name of a high mountain in central Crete (a tentative suggestion of C. H. Gordon in "Homer and Bible", Hebrew Union College Annual XXVI (1955), pp. 62, 63).
seas and that the dry land should appear and be covered with vegetation (Gen. 1:9-13). All this according to the theory in question transpired within twenty-four hours. But continents just emerged from under the seas do not become thirsty land as fast as that by the ordinary process of evaporation. And yet according to the principle revealed in Gen. 2:5 the process of evaporation in operation at that time was the ordinary one.

The results, indeed, approach the ludicrous when it is attempted to synchronize Gen. 2:5 with Genesis 1 interpreted in terms of a week of twenty-four-hour days. On that interpretation, vegetation was created on what we may call "Tuesday". Therefore, the vegetationless situation described in Gen. 2:5 cannot be located later than "Tuesday" morning. Neither can it be located earlier than that for Gen. 2:5 assumes the existence of dry land which does not appear until the "third day". Besides, would it not have been droll to attribute the lack of vegetation to the lack of water either on "Sunday" when the earth itself was quite unfashioned or on "Monday" when there was nothing but water to be seen? Hence the twenty-four-hour day theorist must think of the Almighty as hesitant to put in the plants on "Tuesday" morning because it would not rain until later in the day! (It must of course be supposed that it did rain, or at least 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.)

How can a serious exegete fail to see that such a reconstruction of a "Tuesday morning" in a literal creation week is completely foreign to the historical perspectives of Gen. 2:5? It is a strange blindness that questions the orthodoxy of all who reject the traditional twenty-four-hour day theory when the truth is that endorsement of that theory is incompatible with belief in the self-consistency of the Scriptures.

But any strictly chronological interpretation of Genesis 1, even if the "days" are regarded as ages, forces the exegete inescapably into conflict with the principle disclosed in Gen. 2:5. The traditional day-age theorist must, for example, imagine that during the creation era plants and trees flourished on the face of an earth spinning alone through a sunless,
BECAUSE IT HAD NOT RAINED

moonless, starless void. Now it will be recognized that that is not ordinary botanical procedure - and yet Gen. 2:5 takes for granted ordinary botanical procedure.

In the vain attempt to avoid such a reconstruction, according to which vegetation (product of the "third day") thrives without benefit of the sun (product of the "fourth day"), the most unwarranted notions of the work of the "fourth day" have been substituted for the straightforward statements of the text. Gen. 1:14-19 declares that the heavenly bodies were on the "fourth day" created and set in their familiar positions. Moses is certainly not suggesting merely that hitherto hidden heavenly bodies now became visible on earth. He knew how to express such an idea in Hebrew if that had been his intent (cf. his account of the appearance of the continents from under the seas, v. 9). The very least that transpired on the "day" in question is that the sun was brought into a radically 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. But the strictly chronological view of Genesis 1, even with such a minimizing exegesis of the "fourth day", must still suppose that prior to this re-ordering of the universe on the "fourth day", plant life had flourished on the earth contrary to present natural law.

On this traditional reconstruction it is impossible to make sense of Gen. 2:5. Surely if vegetation could have flourished without the sun it could have survived without rain. Laws quite unlike any we know would then have prevailed. For that matter, God could have preserved forests in space without so much as roots in a dry earth. It would then, however, be completely irrelevant for Gen. 2:5 to assign natural reasons for the absence of vegetation. Indeed, the very fact that it offered a perfectly natural explanation would bring Gen. 2:5 into principal contradiction to Genesis 1.

To the divisive higher critic this might mean only that there is another item to add to his list of alleged contradictions between the two variant creation accounts he supposes he has discovered in Genesis 1 and 2. But the orthodox exegete, having been confronted with the evidence of ordinary providential procedure in Genesis 2:5 will be bound to reject the rigidly chronological interpretations of Genesis 1 for the reason...
that they necessarily presuppose radically different providential operations for the creation period.

If Gen. 2:5 obviates certain traditional interpretations of Genesis 1, by the same token it validates the not so traditional interpretation which regards the chronological framework of Genesis 1 as a figurative representation of the time span of creation and judges that within that figurative framework the data of creation history have been arranged according to other than strictly chronological considerations.

To be sure, certain features are found in their proper relative positions chronologically. But where that is so it must be determined by factors other than the order of narration. It is perfectly obvious, for example, that the rest of the "seventh day", expressive of the divine joy in creation consummated, must follow chronologically the creation labors themselves. Again, the implications of man's position as lord of creation, the scope of the cultural mandate, and other considerations require that the creation of man concluded the creative acts of God in the actual historical sequence as well as in the order of narration.

Nevertheless, Genesis 2:5 forbids the conclusion that the order of narration is exclusively chronological. The rationale of the arrangement involves other factors. To some extent a topical approach informs the account. As has been frequently observed, a succession of correspondences emerges when the contents of "days" one to three are laid alongside the contents of "days" four to six. Another literary interest at work within this parallelism is that of achieving climax, as is done, for example, in introducing men after all other creatures as their king.

Of greater significance for the life of man than these merely literary devices is the Sabbathic pattern of the over-all structure of Gen. 1:1-2:3. For the Creator's way in the day that he made the earth and the heavens must be the way, of his image-bearer also. The precise ratio of man's work to his rest is a matter of following the chronological structure of the revelation in which God was pleased to record his creation triumph. The aeons of creation history could have been divided into other than six periods. For temporally the "days" are not of equal length (cf., e.g., the seventh "day"
BECAUSE IT HAD NOT RAINED

which is everlasting), and logically the infinitely diversified creative works were susceptible of analysis into other than six divisions. But the Creator in his wisdom, adapting the proportions of the ordinance, it would seem, to the constitutional needs of man, chose to reveal his creative acts in terms of six "days" of work followed by a seventh "day" of rest.

The divine demand for human imitation inherent in the Sabbathic pattern of that revelation becomes articulate in the fourth word of the decalogue. The comparison there drawn between the divine original and the human copy is fully satisfied by the facts that in each case there is the Sabbathic principle and the six-one ratio. The argument that Genesis 1 must be strictly chronological because man's six days of labor follow one another in chronological succession forces the analogy unnecessarily. The logic of such argument would not allow one to stop short of the conclusion that the creation "days" must all have been of equal duration and twenty-four hours at that.

THE LITERARY GENRE OF GENESIS 1

Quite apart from the evidence of Gen. 2:5 the figurative framework interpretation of Genesis 1 which it demands would commend itself to us above the traditional interpretations. Only brief mention will be made here of other lines of evidence since it is the main burden of this article to center attention on Gen. 2:5 whose decisive import for the Genesis 1 problem has (to the writer's knowledge) been hitherto unappreciated.

The literary character of Gen. 1:1-2:3 prepares the exegete for the presence there of a stronger figurative element than might be expected were it ordinary prose. This passage is not, of course, full-fledged Semitic poetry. But neither is it ordinary prose. Its structure is strophic and throughout the strophes many refrains echo and re-echo. Instances occur of other poetic features like parallelism (1:27; 2:2) and alliteration (1:1). In general then the literary treatment of the creation in Genesis 1 is in the epic tradition.

Having made such an observation concerning the literary
genre of the creation record, it is imperative (especially in the present theological scene) that one convinced of the genuinely historical nature of the events recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis promptly add that the disregard for historical truth associated with the usual epic is not imported along with the formal literary aspects of the epic style into the divine revelation. Such importation was no more inevitable than that the polytheism of pre-biblical psalmody, for example, must have been carried over with the religious lyric form into the biblical Psalter. Though Genesis 1 be epic in literary style, its contents are not legendary or mythical in either a Liberal or Barthian sense. The semi-poetic style, however, should lead the exegete to anticipate the figurative strand in this genuinely historical record of the origins of the universe.

It also needs considerable emphasis, even among orthodox exegetes, that specific evidence is required for identifying particular elements in the early chapters of Genesis as literary figures. The semi-poetic form of Genesis 1 does not make it an exception. Exegesis which disregards this degenerates into allegorizing and these chapters are not allegories.

The specific exegetical evidence for the figurative character of the several chronological terms in Genesis 1 has been repeatedly cited. The word "day" must be figurative because it is used for the eternity during which God rests from his creative labors. The "day's" subordinate elements, "evening" and "morning", must be figurative for they are mentioned as features of the three "days" before the text records the creation of those lights in the firmament of heaven which were to divide the day from the night. (From the position taken in this article the last argument is, of course, only ad hominem. But on the other hand, if the validity of the interpretation advocated here is recognized, the figurative nature of the "evenings" and "mornings" follows with equal necessity.)

Purely exegetical considerations, therefore, compel the conclusion that the divine author has employed the imagery of an ordinary week to provide a figurative chronological framework for the account of his creative acts. And if it is a figurative week then it is not a literal week of twenty-four-hour days. Furthermore, once the figurative nature of the chronological pattern is appreciated the literalness of the sequence is
no more sacrosanct than the literalness of the duration of the days in this figurative week.

Whether the events narrated occurred in the order of their narration would, as far as the chronological framework of Genesis 1 is concerned, be an open exegetical question. The question is actually closed in favor of the non-chronological interpretation by the exegetical evidence of Gen. 2:5. But if the exegete did not have the light of Gen. 2:5, he would certainly be justified in turning to natural revelation for possible illumination of the question left open by special revelation. And surely natural revelation concerning the sequence of developments in the universe as a whole and the sequence of the appearance of the various orders of life on our planet (unless that revelation has been completely misinterpreted) would require the exegete to incline to a not exclusively chronological interpretation of the creation week.

The exegete could then find confirmation of this view in the evidence of a topical interest in the arrangement of Genesis 1 and in the non-chronological mode of representing history which is certainly common enough elsewhere in Scripture. He might also well observe the likeness between Moses' record of the creation "week" and certain visions of John, the seer of the Apocalypse, which are heptad in structure with successively numbered divisions and yet are not strictly chronological in sequence. It appears that the God of revelation chose to reveal the primeval ages of creation and the eschatological ages of re-creation in similar literary form.

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THE HA-BI-RU--KIN OR FOE OF ISRAEL?

THIRD ARTICLE

MEREDITH G. KLINE

II. Ha-BI-ru--HEBREW RELATIONS

A fascination with the possibilities of illuminating Hebrew origins has characterized studies of the ha-BI-ru. As observed at the outset, popular theory has it that the Hebrews were one offshoot of the ha-BI-ru. This theory may start with the supposition that the ha-BI-ru were a social class or an ethnic group. Although some form of either approach can be developed without the assumption that the terms ha-BI-ru and 'Ibri can be equated phonetically or at least semantically they are greatly strengthened if such equation can be established. It is necessary in this connection to survey the usage of 'Ibrim in the Old Testament and to face the question of the phonetic relation of ha-BI-ru and 'Ibri.

A. The Usage of 'Ibrim in the Old Testament.

Support for the view that the term ha-BI-ru denotes a larger whole from which the biblical Hebrews originated has been claimed in the usage of the term 'Ibrim in the Old Testament. There is no doubt that the gentilic 'Ibri is ordinarily used in the Old Testament as an ethnicon for Abraham and his descendants of the Isaac-Jacob line. In a
few passages, however, some have judged that 'Ibrim is used in a non-Israelite or even appellative sense and that in such texts an original, wider (i.e., ha-BI-ru) connotation emerges. These passages must be examined.

1. The 'Ebed 'Ibri Legislation.

In the legislation of Exod. 21:2 and Deut. 15:12 and in the references to these laws in Jer. 34:9, 14 the term 'Ibri has been thought to denote not the ethnic character of the servant but a particular variety of servanthood. J. Lewy develops this theory on the basis of his interpretation of the term ha-BI-ru in the Nuzu contracts as an appellative meaning "foreign-servant", and his judgment that the parallels between the status of the ha-BI-ru servants and the 'ebed 'Ibri of Exod. 21:2 (and the associated passages) are so close and numerous as to indicate identical institutions and identity of meaning for ha-BI-ru and 'Ibri.\(^{179}\)

the Israeli author who employs the term he is often adapting his terminology to the usage in the context. In several passages a contrast is drawn between Israelites and other ethnic groups.

It has been suggested that 'Ibri uniformly possesses a peculiar connotation. For example, DeVaux (RB 55, 1948, pp. 344 ff.) maintains that it has a derogatory nuance and finds the common element in the fact that the 'Ibrim are strangers in the milieu, while Kraeling (AJSL 58, 1941 pp. 237 ff.) suggests that 'Ibri is an alternate for "Israelite" in situations where the designee is not a free citizen in a free community or on free soil. The latter formulation seems to be successful in unravelling a strand common to all the 'Ibri contexts but it remains uncertain whether such a nuance necessarily attached to the employment of the word. Cf. Greenberg, op. cit., p. 92.

\(^{179}\) HUCA XIV, 1939, pp. 587 ff.; XV, 1940, pp. 47 ff. Cf. his note in Bottero, op. cit., pp. 163-4, where he translates ha-BI-ru as "resident alien". Lewy supports his thesis with the considerations that the ha-BI-ru are present in the Mitannian orbit in the period during which the 'Ibrim became a nation and that the whole area in question had been unified under the Hyksos with the result that the same technical terms and analogous institutions are found throughout. He holds that this social-legal appellative usage of Ibri represents the earliest stage (noting its appearance in the first paragraph of Israel's Book of the Covenant) but that later the term was used in an ethnic sense for the descendants of the "Hebrews par excellence". Cf. supra WTJ XIX, pp. 183, 184.
But is the situation on the Nuzu side clearly as Lewy has reconstructed it? There are texts in which the person(s) concerned is not designated as an ha-Bl-ru and yet the essential clauses of the contract are those characteristic of the contracts where the persons are labeled as ha-Bl-ru. It is, therefore, difficult to insist that we are dealing with a specifically ha-Bl-ru type of servanthood. While, therefore, ha-Bl-ru are found in the great majority of these contracts, they are not necessarily involved in all of them, and one may not assume then the existence in the Nuzu area of a specifically ha-Bl-ru brand of slavery.

Moreover, even if Lewy's view of the Nuzu evidence were to be adopted, the biblical evidence would contradict the translation of 'Ibri as "foreign-servant" in the 'ebed 'Ibri legislation. For the biblical law is patently not dealing with foreign servants but with those who were their masters' brethren. The Deut. 15:12 expansion of the original statement reads, "If thy brother a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee"; while Jeremiah, further expanding it urges "that every man should let go free his man-servant and every man his maid-servant, that is a Hebrew or Hebrewess; that none should make bondmen of them, namely, of a Jew, his brother" (34:9, cf. vs. 14). While one may then recognize the instructive parallels in the conditions of servanthood at Nuzu and in the biblical legislation, it is impossible to hold that 'Ibri is in this legislation a technical term for a

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180 JEN VI, 610, 611, 613 (cf. JEN V, 456:9-23); JEN V, 446, 449, 457 and 462.

181 An alternate interpretation has been advocated in the present study. See supra WTJ XIX, pp. 179, 180, 183, 184.

182 Especially relevant is the figure of Attilammu the Assyrian in the servant contract JEN VI, 613:2. Even when this text in abbreviated form is included in the Sammelurkunde JEN V, 456 between two contracts in which the persons are specifically designated as ha-Bl-ru (i.e., in a situation where there would be a tendency to uniformity), Attilammu is not described as an ha-Bl-ru. It is further to be observed in connection with the use of as-su-ra-a-a-u for Attilammu in JEN VI, 613 that when ha-Bl-ru from Ashur are so described it is as sa₃₄ mat as-su-ur.

183 Note the clear distinction drawn in verse 3 between "the foreigner" and "thy brother" in the law of the seventh year release with respect to debt.
specific type of servanthood\textsuperscript{184} and least of all for the idea of "foreign-servant". Its usage is rather ethnic, as always.


It has been affirmed that the 'Ibrim here (cf. 13:3, 7, 19; 14:11, 21) are quite clearly non-Israelites.\textsuperscript{185} The proper interpretation of these verses is, indeed, difficult; nevertheless, to distinguish between the ‘Ibrim and the Israelites would be at odds with the decisive evidence in this context of their identity. Thus, in 13:3, 4, \textit{כִּלּ} 'צָּרֵאָל יִבְרֵי}, \textit{ךִּלּ} 'צָּרֵאָל יִבְרֵי} and are obvious equivalents (cf. \textit{ךִּלּ} 'צָּרֵאָל יִבְרֵי}).\textsuperscript{186} Moreover, it is apparently in reference to the hiding of those described in 13:6 as the "men of Israel" that the Philistines say, "Behold, the ‘Ibrim are coming out of the holes where they had hid themselves" (14:11b). Again, the equivalence of \textit{כִּלּ} 'צָּרֵאָל יִבְרֵי} with the inhabitants \textit{ךִּלּ} 'צָּרֵאָל יִבְרֵי} and with \textit{ךִּלּ} 'צָּרֵאָל יִבְרֵי} in 13:19, 20 is evident.

To find, then, in the ‘Ibrim of 13:7 a group ethnically distinct from the "men of Israel" in 13:6 would involve for the term ‘Ibrim a change from its contextual significance too abrupt to be plausible. Verses 6 and 7 are concerned with two groups of Israelites. Verse 6 refers to those excused by Saul from military service (cf. vs. 2).\textsuperscript{187} These hide in the hills and caves west of Jordan. Verse 7 refers to certain of the selected troops who were with Saul at Gilgal near the Jordan. These, deserting, cross over the river to the land of Gad and Gilead east of Jordan.\textsuperscript{188}

\textsuperscript{184} The ‘ebed in the phrase ‘ebed ‘Ibri (Exod. 21:2) would then be tautological, and Alt feels obliged to exscind it from the text.
\textsuperscript{185} Cf. e. g., A. Guillaume, \textit{PEQ.} 1946, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{186} The LXX rendering of the end of verse 3, \textit{θείκασαν οἱ δοῦλοι} (as though the Hebrew were \textit{נָשָׁבְרָה מִי פָּשִׁית} \textit{אשְׁרָאֶל}) seems to be a conjectural emendation occasioned by the fact that \textit{נָשָׁבְרָה מִי פָּשִׁית} comes somewhat unexpectedly on the lips of Saul.
\textsuperscript{187} 13:4b does not describe a regathering of those sent home but simply indicates the new location of Saul and his chosen army at Gilgal.
\textsuperscript{188} There were originally 3000 chosen by Saul (13:2), but after the approach of the Philistines in force and Samuel's delay there were only 600 left (13:11, 15; 14:2).
In 14:21 it is not necessary to follow the English versions in regarding the ‘Ibrim as men who had been serving in the Philistine army. Even if such a translation were adopted, it would still be gratuitous to identify these ‘Ibrim as non-Israelites for they might be Israelite turn-coats.

But verse 21 may be translated: "Now the Hebrews were towards the Philistines as formerly when they went up with them in the camp round about; both they were with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan and...". The antecedent of מָנוֹאָלָא, "with them", appears to be "Saul and all the people (or army)" of verse 20. Another possibility is to regard "the Philistines" as the antecedent of "them" but to translate the preposition "against". In either case this passage would contain no mention of ‘Ibrim as having served in Philistine forces. Verses 21 and 22 rather distinguish as two elements swelling the unexpectedly triumphant remnants of Saul's army those who had deserted after being selected by Saul to encamp against the Philistines (vs. 21) and those who, after being dismissed by Saul, were frightened into hiding by the alarming course of the conflict (vs. 22).

This distinction in 14:21, 22 is the same as that found in 13:6, 7a. Indeed, the terminology in the two passages is deliberately made to correspond. ‘Ibrim is used in both 13:7a and 14:21 for the deserters; and "men of Israel" in 13:6 and 14:22 for the people who hid in the hill-country of Ephraim. The ‘Ibrim of 14:21 will then be the deserting soldiers of Saul who had crossed over the Jordan but now resume their former position in the Israelite ranks against the Philistines.

190 Is this an allusion to the circumstance that the original three Israelite positions at Bethel, Michmash, and Gibeah surrounded the Philistine garrison at Gaba? If the Massoretic text and accentuation (נַבְיֵב) stand, the next clause will be a pseudo-verbal construction (as translated above). The LXX and Syraic would read פְּלַכָּב, "they also turned", which would provide a parallel to מְמָאָלָא (vs. 22).
191 Cf. Brown, Driver and Briggs, op. cit., under מְמָאָל (lc).
192 For a similar military development see Judg. 7:3-7, 23, 24.
193 The use of מְמָאָל in 13:7a suggests the possibility of מְמָאָל, "those who passed over", as the original in 14:21 (cf. the participle).

Is ‘Ibri in this its earliest biblical appearance used eth- 
nically? This question may be dealt with in connection with 
an inquiry into the origin of the term ‘Ibri. Broad contextual 
considerations indicate that in his use of ‘Ibri in Gen. 14:13, 
the author had in mind ‘Eber of the line of Shem (cf. Gen. 
10:21, 24, 25; 11:14-17). The direct descent of Abraham 
from ‘Eber had already been traced in the genealogy of 
Gen. 11:10-26. Moreover, the departure from the stereotyped 
presentation of the genealogical data in Gen. 10 to describe 
Shem as "the father of all the children of ‘Eber" (vs. 21) is 
most readily accounted for as an anticipation of the author's 
imminent concentration (cf. Gen. 11:27 ff.) upon the Semitic 
Eberites par excellence, i. e., the "Hebrews" whom Yahweh 
chose to be the channel of revelation and redemption. In 
Gen. 14:13 then, ‘Ibri is a patronymic, applied in this isolated 
way to Abraham perhaps to contrast him with the many other 
ethnic elements which play a role in this context.

On the other hand, many regard this usage of ‘Ibri as 
appellative and then find their interpretations of the term 
ha-BI-ru reflected in it. The appellative view is ancient, 
for the LXX renders יְרֵבִי as ᾖ περατῆς, Aquila, as 
περατῆς; Jerome, as transeuphratensis; and the prevailing 
view of the rabbis a generation after Aquila was that 
ירבי in the corresponding member of 14:21). Such a change in the Massoretic 
pointing would support a corresponding change to יְרֵבִי in 13:7a. If 
the Massoretic יְרֵבִי is original, the author perhaps employed this 
designation of the Israelites to produce a word play with יְרֵבִי.

194 יְרֵבִי (‘ibri) is the gentilic formation of יְרָבִי (‘eber).
195 Cf. also the additional remark in Gen. 10:25.
196 For example, W. F. Albright, JAOS 48, 1928, pp. 183 ff., once found 
in both the idea of "mercenary"; and DeVaux, op. cit., pp. 337 ff., that of 
"stranger". Kraeling, op. cit., held that ‘Ibri is used to underscore Abra- 
ham's role as a sojourner who pays tribute to Melchizedek.
197 Parzen, AJSL 49, pp. 254 ff., is mistaken in his opinion that the 
LXX actually found יְרֵבִי in the Hebrew text. Noth, "Erwagungen zur 
Hebraerfrage", in Festschrift Otto Procksch (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 99 ff., is 
probably correct in stating that the LXX translator simply regarded it as 
desirable at this first appearance of ‘Ibri to indicate what was, in his 
opinion, its significance.
designated Abraham as "from the other side of the river".\textsuperscript{198} All of these derived 'Ibri from the substantive meaning "the other side" rather than from the verb 'br.\textsuperscript{199} In line with this view of the etymology is the emphasis in Joshua 24:2, 3 on Abraham's origin "beyond the River". But these facts are far from possessing the weight of the more immediate contextual considerations cited above. Here too then 'Ibri is not appellative but ethnic.

4. Conclusion.

It has appeared from this study that, the term 'Ibrim in the Old Testament has uniformly an ethnic meaning and denotes descendants of Eber in the line of Abraham-Isaac-Jacob exclusively. Deriving from the eponymous ancestor 'Eber the term is probably early;\textsuperscript{200} in particular, its application to Abraham need not be proleptic. To judge from its characteristic association with foreigners in the biblical contexts and the general avoidance of it by the Israelites, it possibly originated outside the line of Abraham. Originally it may have been of wider application than is the usage in the Old Testament, denoting other descendants of Eber than the Abrahamites. This is perhaps suggested by the use of 'Eber in Gen. 10:21 and Num. 24:24.\textsuperscript{201} In that

\textsuperscript{198} Greenberg, op. cit., p. 5, n. 24, directs attention to the evidence for this in B'resit Rabba 42, 8. A minority opinion of the rabbis was that Abraham was called the 'Ibri because he was a descendant of 'Eber.

\textsuperscript{199} This appears to be so even in the LXX, although later Patristic writings in treating the LXX rendering derived it from a verbal base. (cf. Greenberg, ibid.).

\textsuperscript{200} Kraeling, op. cit., offers the strange hypothesis that "Hebrews" is a secondarily personalized form of a geographical name, i.e., "Overites" from \textit{ץבִּרּ הַמְכֵר} adopted by the Israelites as late as the early monarchy in an attempt to orientate themselves to the world in which they had just become prominent. The usage would thus be that of the first millennium even when applied to the Patriarchs. H. H. Rowley counters: (a) in the early monarchy, consciousness of being from over the Euphrates is not apparent among the Hebrews; (b) the term disappeared almost completely from the Old Testament with the establishment of the monarchy; (c) The Israelites would hardly adopt as a symbol of self-esteem a term "generally employed in a pejorative sense". \textit{PEQ}, 1942, pp. 41-53; From Joseph to Joshua, 1952, pp. 54-5; cf. further O'Callaghan's criticism in Aram Naharaim p. 216, n. 4.

\textsuperscript{201} The validity of conclusions based on the tradition of descent from
case the appearance of such gentilic but non-Abrahamic ‘Ibrim in some non-biblical text of the patriarchal age need not come altogether unexpectedly.

Do the ha-BI-ru qualify? According to the conclusions already reached in this study concerning the probable geographical and ethnic origins of the ha-BI-ru they do not qualify as Semitic let alone Eberite kin of the Hebrews.202 On the other hand, a final judgment on this larger issue is

Eber is challenged by DeVaux's contention (op. cit.) that there are divergent views within the Old Testament. He grants that the composer(s) of the biblical genealogies derives ‘Ibri from the ancestor ‘Eber, but finds in the reference to Jacob as a "wandering Aramean" (Deut. 26:5) a conflicting tradition of Aramaic origin (cf. Gen. 10:22-24). DeVaux believes the latter to be further supported by the description of Laban, grandson of Abraham's brother Nahor, as an "Aramean" (Gen. 31:20). According to the record, however, the term "Aramean" could have been applied to both Jacob and Laban in virtue of their long residence in Paddan-aram and so construed would say nothing about their lineage. DeVaux also insists, but unnecessarily, on identifying the Aram of Gen. 10:22 and the Aram of Gen. 22:21, which would then bring the two passages into hopeless confusion. Finally, DeVaux appeals to the prophetic denunciation of Jerusalem in Ezek. 16:3, "your origin and your nativity are of the land of the Canaanite; the Amorite was your father and the Hittite your mother". Actually, as is apparent from the context (cf. especially vss. 45 ff.), Ezekiel is using a scathing figure to say that from the first Israel was just as much disqualified spiritually from enjoying a covenantal relationship with Yahweh as were her despised heathen neighbors--the point being that Israel's election must be attributed solely to the principle of divine grace. But even if Ezekiel were speaking of literal racial intermixture, the reference would be not to Abraham's family origins but to the subsequent mingling of the racial strain of his descendants with those of the inhabitants of Canaan. DeVaux's view is that the Hebrews and ha-BI-ru were of common Aramaean descent. Starting with the notion that the ha-BI-ru were desert nomads, DeVaux seeks to relate the ha-BI-ru to the Aramaeans by a partial identification of them with proto-Aramaean nomadic Ahamlu.

202 Greenberg, op. cit, pp. 93 ff., provides an example of how the biblical usage of ‘Ibrim can be regarded as consistently ethnic, and ha-BI-ru be deemed an appellative for a social class, and yet the terms be equated and the Hebrews derived from the ha-BI-ru. He suggests that Abraham was an ha-BI-ru, but this epithet as applied to Abraham's descendants became an ethnicon. Later biblical genealogists, unaware of this, invented the ancestor ‘Eber, man of many descendants, in order to explain at one stroke the known kinship of the Hebrews to other Semitic tribes and the origin of their name!
bound to be seriously affected by one's opinion on the phonetic question of whether the term *ha-BI-ru* can be equated with the term *'Ibri* (and so be derived from *'Eber*).  

B. Phonetic Relation of Ha-BI-ru to *Ibri*.

1. Consonants. The common cuneiform spelling of the name is *ha-BI-ru* the final *u* being, according to the usual assumption, the nominative case ending, which yields as the grammatical relations require to other case or gentilic endings. In this cuneiform rendering the identity of the first two radicals is ambiguous. The initial consonant is ambiguous because Accadian *h* may represent other letters than Hebrew *װ*; among them, Hebrew *װ*. The second is ambiguous because

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203 In addition to the supposed phonetic equivalence of *ha-BI-ru* and *'Ibri*, support has been sought for the derivation of the Hebrews from the *ha-BI-ru* by appeal to certain parallels in the careers of the two. But the similarities are for the most part superficial or based on misinterpretations of the data on one side or the other. For a recent popular example see H. Orlinsky, *Ancient Israel*, 1954; cf. DeVaux *RB* 55, 1948, pp. 342 ff.; H. H. Rowley *From Joseph to Joshua*, 1952, p. 53, n. 1. Items like the following have been or might be mentioned: (a) In each case there is a westward movement about the Fertile Crescent. (But this cannot be demonstrated for the *ha-BI-ru* and, in the case of the Hebrews, it applies not to the group as such but only to Abraham.) (b) The chronological span of the use of the terms *ha-BI-ru* and *'Ibri* is roughly the same. (c) Both groups move in the Hurrian cultural orbit and exhibit the influence of this fact. (d) The military activity of Abraham the Hebrew in Genesis 14 and the attack of Simeon and Levi on Shechem are comparable to *ha-BI-ru* razzias. (But this involves a superficial estimate of both biblical instances.) (e) The *ha-BI-ru* mercenary activity is paralleled by the Hebrews in the Philistine army. (But this is a misinterpretation of the biblical data.) (f) Both groups are in Egypt forced into the corvee. (g) The *ha-BI-ru* are frequently strangers in the milieu and such are the Hebrew patriarchs in Canaan. (h) Both groups deprive Egypt of its holdings in Canaan by military operations during the Amarna Age.

204 Cf. supra, *WTJ* XIX, pp. 9-11.

205 Indeed, as A. Ungnad observes, "Bisweilen wird h für 3 gebraucht" (Grammatik des Akkadischen, 1949, p. 9).

206 In the Canaanite glosses in the Tell el Amarna tablets are found, for example: *hu-ul-lu* (EA 296:38) = ־יּ (cf. XXX) ; and *hi-na-ia* (EA 144:17) = ־יּ (cf. XXXX). Cf. E. A. Speiser, *Ethnic Movements in the Near East in the Second Millennium B.C.*, 1933, p. 39.
HA-BI-RU represents among other values that of pi as well as that of bi in all periods of the cuneiform literature.

Further evidence is available, however, for in some cases other signs of the cuneiform syllabary are used to write this name and, moreover, the name has appeared in other systems of writing, syllabic and alphabetic. From Ras Shamra\(^\text{207}\) comes the form 'prm written in the alphabetic cuneiform common in texts from that site, in which the 'Ayin is distinct from other gutturals and the b is distinct from p. This form is, therefore, unambiguous. But the question has been raised whether this form, in particular the second consonant, is original or secondary. If the phonetic equivalence of 'prm and 'ibrim were to be maintained, the primacy of the p would still he favored by the fact that Ugaritic often preserves a more primitive Semitic form than does the Hebrew.\(^\text{208}\) On the other hand there is evidence of an original b becoming p in Ugaritic.\(^\text{209}\)

In Egyptian hieroglyphics appears the form 'pr.w which is also without ambiguity. But here again the question arises as to whether the p is primary or secondary. It can be shown that Egyptian p may represent foreign, including Semitic, b, especially when the b is immediately preceded or followed by l

\(^\text{207}\) Virolleaud, *Syria* 21, 1940, p. 132, pl. 8 and p. 134, pl. 10.

\(^\text{208}\) So Kraeling, *AJSL* 58, 1941, pp. 237 ff. Cf. W. F. Albright, *BASOR* 77, 1940, pp. 32-3; DeVaux, *RB* 55, 1948, p. 342, n. 3. In an effort to show that it is "quite possible that the isolated Ugaritic as well as the Egyptian pr are secondary forms due to Hurrian influence" J. Lewy observes that "the population of Ugarit included Hurrian elements and that the Hurrians, wherever they appear, are responsible for a confusion in the rendering of Semitic IGATION and İ because their scribes did not distinguish between voiced and voiceless stops" (*HUCA* 15, 1940, p. 48, n. 7). C. H. Gordon, however, informs me that the Ugaritic scribes who wrote the tablets bearing 'prm carefully distinguish p and b. J. W. Jack (*PEQ*, 1940, p. 101) attributes the Ugaritic spelling to Egyptian influence at Ugarit.

or $r$. Such, however, is not the rule, and, as Kraeling observes, in the case of the 'pr.w, a people present in Egypt itself, it is difficult to assume an error of hearing on the part of the scribe.

The spelling $ha$-$BIR$-$a$-$a$ is found twice in Babylonian documents of the 12th and 11th centuries B.C. Commenting on this form, B. Landsberger observes that "$b$ nicht $p$ als mittlerer Radikal steht durch die Schreibung $ha$-$bir$-$a$-$a$ (IV R 34 Nr. 2, 5) fest". In signs, however, of the variety consonant-vowel-consonant there is not only vocalic variability but flexibility of both consonants within the limits of their type.

210 For the evidence see B. Gunn apud Speiser, *op. cit.*, p. 38, n. Cf. J. A. Wilson, *AJS* 49, 4, pp. 275 ff. W. F. Albright (*JAOS* 48, 1928, pp. 183 ff.) argues that the equation of Egyptian 'pr with 'eber is difficult since Egyptian of the New Empire regularly transcribes Semitic $b$ by Egyptian $b$. As for Egyptian $hrp$ for Can. $harb$ (Heb. hereb), he says that it only shows there was the same tendency for a final vowelless sonant stop following a consonant to become voiceless that there is in the modern Arabic dialect of Egypt, but the $b$ in 'eber is medial and cannot have been pronounced as a voiceless $p$. It should be noticed, however, that in some instances of the use of Egyptian $p$ for foreign $b$, the $b$ is medial: thus, $isbr$ varies with $ispr$ ("whip") and $Kpn$ (O. K. Kbn) = Can. $Gbl$ ("Byblos").

211 Gunn *op. cit.*, p. 38, n.: "There are many cases (36 counted) in which a foreign $b$ with $r$ or $l$ either before or after it is represented by $b$ and not by $p$ in the Egyptian writings". Wilson *op. cit.*, pp. 275 ff. affirms that the most straightforward equation is 'pr = $\begin{array}{c}
\end{array}$.


213 Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, IV, 34:2, 5; and Hilprecht, *Old Babylonian Inscriptions*, I, 2, pl. 66, no. 149, 22.

214 ZA, N. F. 1, 1923, p. 214, n. 1.

215 See the remarks of C. H. Gordon, *Orientalia* 19, 1950, pp. 91 ff. There is specific evidence that BIR was used (though not commonly) for pir in the neo-Assyrian period and possibly (the evidence is doubtful) in the middle-Assyrian period. Cf. Von Soden, *Das Akkadische Syllabar*, 1948, p. 73, no. 237. Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 132 urges against reading pir here the absence of specific Babylonian evidence for this value to date, plus the availability of the sign $UD$ (pir). However, he acknowledges (p. 156) that this form is not decisive for a root 'br. It may be additionally noted that J. Lewy in defense of reading the second radical as $b$ appeals to the occurrence of the god "$Ha$-$bi$-$ru$ in an Assyrian text (Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenem Inhalts, no. 42), i. e., in a text in which $ha$-$bi$-$ru$ can hardly stand for *$ha$-$pi$-$ru$" (*HUCA* 15, 1940, p. 48, n. 7). Bottero (*op. cit.*, p. 135) agrees on the grounds that in the neo-Assyrian era one normally
By way of conclusion, there can be no doubt that the Ugaritic and Egyptian forms of the name definitely require that the consonant represented in the cuneiform syllable *ha* be read as 'Ayin.\(^{216}\) They also strongly support an original *p*. While there is a possibility that 'br is primary, it is highly probable that 'pr is the original form. In fact, unless it can be shown that *ha-BI-ru* is to be equated with the biblical 'Ibri there is no unquestionable evidence for 'br as even a secondary form.\(^{217}\)

2. Vowels. That the first vowel is A-type and the second is I-type is obvious from the cuneiform, *ha-BI-ru*;\(^{211}\) but it is more difficult to determine the length of these vowels. This question requires examination before one attempts to draw conclusions concerning the possibilities of phonetic equation with 'Ibri.

used *PI* to signify *pi*. For evidence that *BI* = *pi* in all periods see Von Soden, *ibid.*, p. 53 no. 140. Also J. W. Jack states, "In the Hittite documents, for instance, *habiru* clearly has *bi*" (PEQ, 1940, p. 102). E. Laroche (in Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 71, n. 2) argues, "D'apres le systeme en usage a Boghazkoy, *ha-bi-ri* note une pronunciation habiri (sonore inter-vocalique non geminee) ". But *ha-ab-bi-ri* appears twice. Moreover, P. Sturtevant maintains that in cuneiform Hittite "the Akkadian distinction between ... *p* and *b* did not exist", adding, "To all intents, therefore, Hittite has dispensed with the means of writing *b*" (Comparative Grammar of the Hittite Language, 1933, p. 66). Similarly, J. Friedrich, Hethitisches Elementarbuch I, 1940,p. 6(21). Accordingly, even the form *ha-ab-bi-ri* (KBo V, 9, IV, 12) is quite ambiguous, as it would also be in Akkadian cuneiform where AB stands in all periods for both *ap* and *ab*. Greenberg (*op. cit.*, p. 90, n. 20) suggests the possibility that a Hittite scribe utilized a native convention, doubling the labial to indicate a sound heard by him asp. Also ambiguous is the sign BAD (*bi* or *pi*) used in the Alishar text. 2,6 Cf. Bottero, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

\(^{217}\) Speiser (op. cit., p. 40), writing at a time when he did not have the benefit of the Ugaritic evidence, begged the question of the phonetic equation with 'Ibri in concluding, "The second consonant is ambiguous both in cuneiform and in Egyptian, but not so in Hebrew: since the latter has *b*, the labial must be read as voiced in cuneiform, while the voiceless correspondent in the Egyptian form of the name is to be ascribed to local developments".

\(^{218}\) As far as it goes the Egyptian data is compatible. Gunn (*op. cit.*, p. 38, n.) concludes from a survey of the evidence that "we seem to have the alternatives 'apar, 'apir, 'apur, with a possible indication in" the Beth-shan stele of Seti I "in favor of 'apir". 
a. The A-Vowel: According to Gustavs,\textsuperscript{219} the form ha-\textit{AB-BI-ri}\textsuperscript{220} shows that the \textit{a} is short. He explains the doubling of the middle radical on the ground that consonants in Akkadian are often doubled after an accented short vowel.\textsuperscript{221} This possibility, however, rests on the doubtful opinion that the following I-vowel is short, for otherwise the penult would receive the accent.\textsuperscript{222} Another possible explanation of the doubling of the middle radical, although the phenomenon is rare and late, is that it indicates that the preceding vowel is long.\textsuperscript{223}

Other unusual forms have appeared which suggest that the A-vowel is long. One is \textit{ha-a-BI-ri-ia-as}.\textsuperscript{224} Another is \textit{ha-a-BI-i-ri-a[n?] (cf. ha-a-BI-i-ri-ia-an)}.\textsuperscript{225} Finally, from Alalah comes the form \textit{ha-a'-BI-ru}.\textsuperscript{226}

b. The I-Vowel: Inasmuch as short unaccented vowels between single consonants often drop out\textsuperscript{227} and the name

\textsuperscript{219} ZAW, N. F. 3, 1926, pp. 28 f.
\textsuperscript{220} KBo V, 9, IV, 12. Cf. also ha-\textit{AB-BI-ri-ia-an} (KUB XXXV, 43, III, 31).
\textsuperscript{221} Cf. Ungnad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 18 (6p); W. Von Soden, Grundriss der Akkadischen Grammatik, 1952, p. 21 (20g).
\textsuperscript{222} Cf. Von Soden, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37 (38 f).
\textsuperscript{223} Cf. Ungnad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 7 (3d).
\textsuperscript{224} HT 6, 18. This text is a variant of KUB IX, 34, IV. Greenberg (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 90, n. 20) comments, "Were this writing not unique and not in a word foreign to the Hittites it might have deserved consideration as indicative of a participial form".
\textsuperscript{225} KUB XXXI, 14 (XXXIV, 62), 10; and KUB XXXV, 49, I, 6 ff. (cf. IV, 15).
\textsuperscript{226} \textit{AT} 58:29. E. A. Speiser (\textit{JAOS} 74, 1954, p. 24) observes that the main purpose of this unique form may be to indicate a form like *\textit{Habiru}. He suggests that even if the sign be given its value ah4 instead of \textit{a} the \textit{h} might be a graphic device signifying a long vowel or stressed syllable. Cf. Greenberg (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 20): "Assuming that the scribe was West Semitic he may have noted that his alephs became long vowels in Akkadian: hence, by a sort of back analogy he may have converted what he took to be a long vowel into an aleph". Wiseman (in Bottero, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37) "The word is unusually written ha-‘a-bi-ru. This may be either a case of \textit{HAR=AB}_4 or, as I am inclined to think, a case of the scribe erasing by the three small horizontal strokes of the stylus".
\textsuperscript{227} Cf. Ungnad, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 12, 13 (5c). The possibility that the \textit{i} is short but accented is obviated by the fact that were it short, the antepenult with its long \textit{a} (as maintained above) would receive the accent.
ha-BI-ru is never found without the i, it would seem that this i is long.\textsuperscript{228}

Further support for this is found in the spelling \textit{ha-BI-i-ra}\textsuperscript{229} used for the Nuzu personal name (assuming this name may be identified with our \textit{ha-BI-ru}). There are also the forms noted above: \textit{ha-a-BI-i-ri-[n?] and ha-a-BI-i-ri-ia-an}.

c. Conclusion: The vocalization is largely a question of how much weight to attach to the exceptional spellings. Quite possibly they require two long vowels, producing the (apparently non-Semitic) form, \textit{'apir}. Perhaps only one vowel is long. It would be precarious, however, to assume that every indication of a long vowel is misleading and to adopt the form \textit{'apir} --or still less likely-- \textit{'abir}.

3. The Hebrew Equivalent. The difference in middle radicals between \textit{ha-BI-ru} (read as \textit{ha-pi-ru}) and \textit{'Ibri} would not be an insuperable obstacle for the phonetic equation of the two. There are a few examples of a shift in Hebrew from \textit{p} to \textit{b}\textsuperscript{230}. Nevertheless, this shift is not the rule\textsuperscript{231} and the difference in labials must be regarded as a serious difficulty in the case for equation.

If we allow the consonantal equation and examine the vowels it will be found that the difficulties increase and the equation can be regarded as at best a bare possibility. The following are the possible vowel combinations of \textit{ha-BI-ru} (reading \textit{bi} for the moment and listing the more probable combinations first) along with their normal Hebrew gentilic equivalents: \textit{'abir}, 'אביר; \textit{'abir}, אביר; \textit{'abir}, אביר; \textit{'abir}, אביר; \textit{'abr}, אבר; \textit{'abr}, אבר.

Attempts have been made, however, to derive \textit{'Ibri} from one or other of these vowel combinations. The most plausible efforts are those which assume two short vowels, \textit{'abir}.\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{228} So C. H. Gordon (\textit{Orientalia} 21, 1952, p. 382, n. 2) : "That the i is long follows from the fact that it is not dropt to become *hapru".
\textsuperscript{229} JEN 228:29.
\textsuperscript{231} Cf., e.g., wp, wp, wp, wp, wp.
\textsuperscript{232} J. Lewy (\textit{op. cit.}), assuming the form \textit{Habiru}, suggests that it "is
Speiser suggests that "the form qitl may go back to an older qatil" with the restriction that such forms derive from stative, not transitive, verbs. In line with this, attention has been called to the derivation of late Canaanite milk, "king", from older malik, "prince". "Whatever validity there may be in the theory of a qatil to qitl shift, it must be remembered that such is not the dominant tendency. Moreover, the degree of plausibility in applying such a principle in the present case is greatly diminished by the following considerations: a) The combination of two short vowels ('abir) is one of the less likely possibilities; b) The supposed shift from 'abir to 'ibr did not occur according to our evidence in extra-biblical documents either earlier than, or contemporary with, the appearances of 'Ibri in the Bible. It is necessary to assume that the shift took place first and only with the Hebrew authors. And if we may not assume that the Hebrew form is based on a previous shift to 'ibr elsewhere, then proof is required within the Hebrew language itself, and not merely, for example, from inner-Canaanite developments, of a shift from qatil to qitl.

to and Q̱i̱ṉ as the Akkadian proper name Zakiru(m) [for references see, e. g., A. T. Clay, Personal Names from Cuneiform Inscriptions of the Cassite Period (New Haven, 1912) p. 145] is to Q̱iṉ and Q̱iṉ (Ex. 6:21, etc.) ". There is, however, no evidence that the Hebrew form Q̱iṉ represents the Akkadian Zakiru.

Similarly Bauer-Leander (Grammatik, 459), on the basis of a possible relation of adjectival qatil and abstract qitl: e. g., sapil-sipl, "base-baseness".

So, e. g., Albright, Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible (New York, 1935), p. 206, and Bohl, Kanaander and Hebraer 1911, p. 85. In an earlier article (JBL 43, 1924, pp. 389 ff.), Albright stated that Hebrew 'Eber for 'Ibr stands by epenthesis for *'Apir, adding that the philological process is familiar in all the Semitic languages; e. g., Arab. bi'sa from ba'isa. Cf. the alternation of ma-si-ri and mi-is-ri in syllabic texts from Ugarit.

DeVaux (op. cit.) goes to the extreme of describing the passing of 'apir into 'ipr as "normal".

The qatil type of noun does appear at times in Hebrew like a segholate; cf. Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, 1910, 93 hh, ii. Most of these are of the getel-type which is usually the A-type but is sometimes the I-type (e. g., ḫorr, ḫir); but ḫall (Eccles. 5:7; Ezek. 18:18) is also found and that is clearly I-type. This phenomenon is, however, confined to the construct.
Conclusion: The complete phonetic equation of *ha-BI-ru* and ‘*Ibru* is at most a bare possibility. If a difference in morphology were to be allowed while identity of denotation was assumed the difference in the vowels could be explained\(^{237}\) and only the labial problem would remain as a phonetic obstacle for the theory of common derivation. Even that assumption, however, is implausible in dealing as we are not with appellatives but proper names. The phonetic situation, therefore, is such as would weaken an otherwise strong case for tracing Hebrew origins to the *ha-BI-ru*, not such as to strengthen a theory already feeble.

C. Amarna Age Encounter.

In spite of the negative conclusions reached thus far the investigation of *ha-BI-ru*--Hebrew relationships is not much ado about nothing. For history apparently did witness an *ha-BI-ru*--Hebrew encounter.

How is the *ha-BI-ru* activity in Palestine as reflected in the Amarna letters to be integrated with the Israelite conquest of their promised land as described in the books of Joshua and Judges? That is the question.

1. Conquest. The Amarna activity of the *ha-BI-ru* has been identified by some with the Hebrew Conquest, more specifically, with its first phase led by Joshua. But quite apart from all the aforementioned obstacles to any identification of the two groups, the Conquest under Joshua differed from the Amarna military operations of the *ha-BI-ru* even in broadest outline and fundamental character.

(a) The Hebrew conquerors were a people which had long been in Egypt and were newly arrived in Canaan. The Ugaritic and Alalah evidence reveals that the *ha-BI-ru* were state. This restriction would not, of course, be significant so far as the gentilic form *yrib;fi* is concerned. It becomes significant though when account is taken of the derivation of *yrib;fi* from the patronymic *rbAfa* which is found in the absolute state.

\(^{237}\) Albright compares a development of gentilic ‘*Ibru* from an appellative *ha-BI-ru* to *Levi*, "Levite", probably derived from *lawiyu*, "person pledged for a debt or vow"; *Qeni*, "kenite", from *qain*, "smith"; or *hopshi*, "free-man", from *hupshu*. 
in Syria for a long while before the Hebrew Conquest (on any view of its date). Moreover, since in Syria the *ha-BI-ru* had long enjoyed permanent settlements of their own in well-regulated, peace-time integration with the local population and authorities, while the Amarna letters show the *ha-BI-ru* in Palestine to be on the move, quartered here and there, without absolute loyalty to any one party, it seems clear that the Amarna *ha-BI-ru* were in Canaan as professional militarists to exploit the anarchy there for their northern lords.

(b) Also in conflict with this picture of the *ha-BI-ru* operating in relatively small, detached companies and fighting as mercenaries with no apparent national aspirations of their own as *ha-BI-ru* is the biblical picture of the Hebrew Conquest as an invasion by a united multitude, advancing in their own name in a concerted effort to achieve a common national goal. (c) The natives of Canaan were to the Israelites an enemy to be exterminated; the acceptance of them as allies would directly contravene Israel's purposes. But the *ha-BI-ru* had no special antipathy for the Canaanites as such. Quite the contrary, the Canaanites were their employers, and for the most part the *ha-BI-ru* are found abetting the attempts of those Canaanites who strove to gain independence from Egyptian domination. Complaints are frequently heard from the loyalists that Canaanite rebels are going over to the cause of the *SA-GAZ*.

(d) The goal of Israel in Canaan with respect to the land was to gain possession, and agreeably their general policy in dealing with cities was to exterminate the population and seize the spoil but to refrain from destroying the cities by fire. The *ha-BI-ru*, however, after conquering and plundering, frequently set the city on fire, apparently having no designs to acquire territory or to build an empire.

The difference between the two movements can also be traced in matters of detail.

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238 Cf. Josh. 11:19. Nothing underscores this more than the anomalous character of the Gibeonite alliance. It should not be overlooked, however, that after the days of Joshua's leadership the original determination gave way frequently to a fraternizing attitude (e. g., Judg. 3:5-6).

239 So repeatedly in *EA* 185.
(a) Names: None of the names of the Israelite leaders is found in the Amarna letters. Moreover, where the names of the rulers of specific Canaanite cities can be checked (as at Jerusalem, Lachish, Gezer, and Hazor) there is in every case disagreement between the Bible and the Amarna texts.

(b) Numbers: In the pleas of the loyalists for military assistance it appears that Egyptian support in the form of fifty or so men will be adequate to turn the tide of battle. It seems unlikely then that these Canaanite kings were confronted with an assault on the scale of Joshua's army.

(c) Places: The ha-BI-ru operated successfully in Phoenicia and Syria, but neither the Conquest under Joshua nor later tribal efforts penetrated that far.

(d) Military Technology: The Israelites made no use of chariotry, whereas chariots were a standard division of the ha-BI-ru corps at Alalah and in Palestine.

2. Pre-Conquest. An alternative must be found then to identifying the biblical Conquest under Joshua with the Amarna disclosures. The procedure of the majority of scholars is to place Joshua after the Amarna events. Thus Meek,

240 Proposals to equate Joshua with Yashuia and Benjamin with Benenima (or Ben-elima) are phonetically impossible. Furthermore the Amarna men were pro-Egyptian.

241 Cf. Exod. 12:37; 38:26; Num. 1:46; 2:32; 26:51. At the same time it should not be overlooked that even fifty professional soldiers might provide adequate leadership to defend a walled garrison. Moreover, there are larger requests like that of Rib-Addi (EA 71:23-24) for fifty pair of horses and 200 infantry as a merely defensive measure.

242 The way in which this argument is developed by Rowley (op. cit., pp. 42 ff.) is an illuminating exhibition of rewriting history to one's taste. He argues that the exploits of Joshua were mainly if not entirely confined to the central districts while the ha-BI-ru trouble was in the south and north and only at Shechem in the center. It will be recognized that this is the precise opposite of the prima facie biblical account, according to which Joshua's campaigns were notably in the south (Josh. 10) and in the north (Josh. 11:1-14). Rowley rejects Joshua 10 in favor of the supposedly conflicting account in Judges 1; and Joshua 11, in favor of the supposed variant in Judges 4. According to the record itself, Judges 1 records events after the death of Joshua and the events of Judges 4 fall well over a century after those of Joshua 11.

243 Cf., e. g., Josh. 11:9.

244 Cf. EA 87:21; 197:2-11.
though he believes the Amarna ha-BI-ru and Joshua's campaign belong to one movement, specifies that "the Amarna account marks the beginning of the movement, while the Old Testament account has to do largely with its final accomplishment". An odd quirk of Meek's view is that the Exodus from Egypt under Moses follows Joshua by more than a century.

Albright, though he posits an earlier, pre-Amarna exodus from Egypt and entry into Canaan on the part of the Joseph tribes and finds their presence in central Palestine before the major Hebrew arrival reflected in the ha-BI-ru of the Amarna letters, dates the (second) exodus (i.e., Moses leading out the Leah tribes) and the campaigning of Joshua in the 13th century, long after the Amarna correspondence.

To cite one further variety of this approach, there is Rowley's intricate reconstruction. He also espouses a theory of a two-fold entry into the land, according to which certain Hebrew groups, notably Judah, press northward from Kadesh c. 1400 B.C. (these Rowley would identify with the ha-BI-ru of the Amarna letters) while kindred tribes, including Asher, Zebulon, and Dan, exert pressure in the north (these, Rowley conjectures, are the SA-GAZ of the Amarna letters). But the exodus from Egypt under Moses and the entry of Joshua into central Palestine he dates late in the 13th century B.C.

It will be observed that all these efforts to locate Joshua after the Amarna episode involve drastic recasting of the biblical data—the rejection not merely of points of detail but of the biblical history in its basic structure. It requires some ingenuity, indeed, to produce one of these elaborate creations by weaving together a host of miscellaneous data sublimated from their original contexts, but the result is fiction not history. Under the mask of a claim of controlling the biblical sources by means of archaeological and extra-biblical sources an almost totally undisciplined biblical exegesis has been introduced. But why the penchant for the hasty rejection of the Old Testament source in favor of

\[245\text{Op. cit.}\]
\[246\text{BASOR 58, 1935, pp. 10 ff.}\]
\[247\text{See Rowley, op. cit., esp. pp. 140 ff. for a survey of the various views.}\]
interpretations of archaeological evidence which are themselves so uncertain and disputed at countless points?

3. Post-Conquest. There is another alternative for the integration of the Amarna and the biblical histories. It is the reverse of those just surveyed in that it locates the Conquest under Joshua before rather than after the Amarna letters, at least before those of Abdi-Hepa.248 This is in

248 The historian is at this juncture always embroiled in the complex question of the date of the Exodus. Aware of the difficulties of the early date (i.e., locating Joshua in or before the Armarna Age) and not aware of the proper solution of them all, the writer nevertheless finds insuperable the difficulties of a later date. Relevant as the problem is, limitations of space allow only brief comment on a few salient points: a) The case presented by H. H. Rowley (in From Joseph to Joshua) against a Hebrew entry into Egypt in the Hyksos period has not been answered. If valid, that majority of scholars which is certainly correct in dating the patriarchal period early in the second millennium B.C. rather than (with Rowley) in the middle of it must date the beginning of the sojourn before the Hyksos period, not (with Rowley) after it. And that, in turn, virtually necessitates the early date of the Exodus. b) Advocates of a 19th dynasty Exodus constantly appeal to the archaeological evidences of royal building operations at the sites of Pithom and Raamses. G. E. Wright, for a recent example, states, "We now know that if there is any historical value at all to the store-city tradition in Exodus (and there is no reason to doubt its reliability), then Israelites must have been in Egypt at least during the early part of the reign of Ramses II" (Biblical Archaeology (Philadelphia and London, 1957), p. 60. Italics his.) That is a curiously misleading statement. Is it not rather the case that, if one has no reason to doubt the reliability of the record in Exodus 1:11 that Pharaoh forced the Israelites to build Pithom and Raamses as store-cities, he cannot possibly identify that pharaoh with Ramses II? For it is inconceivable that anyone should have described the magnificent operations of Ramses II at these sites, transforming one of them into the capital of Egypt, in the "store-cities" terms of Exodus 1:11. The Hebrew building and the Hebrew Exodus must then precede Ramses II. c) Albright has dated the destruction of Canaanite Bethel, Lachish, and Debir, all by conflagration, in the 13th century B.C., and would identify this destruction with Joshua's campaigns as evidence of a late Exodus. Such a deduction does not do justice to the biblical facts that Canaanite reoccupation frequently followed Joshua's conquest of Canaanite cities and that destruction by fire was exceptional in Joshua's campaigns. (Apparently only Jericho and Ai among the southern cities were burned and only Hazor was burned in the Galilean campaign, Josh. 11:13.) The evidence of these Palestinian excavations, therefore, actually requires a date for Joshua considerably earlier than the
precise agreement with the chronological data in Judges 11:26 and 1 Kings 6:1 and assumes a fairly brief period for Joshua's campaigns which also agrees with the biblical record.\textsuperscript{249}

Even more compatible with this view than with the identification of Joshua's campaigns and the Amarna activity are certain facts which have long constituted a popular argument in favor of the latter view.\textsuperscript{251} Giving it a somewhat different turn than the advocates of identification, the argument is as follows: Precisely those cities which appear in the Amarna letters as under Canaanite control, whether pro-Egyptian or rebel (and, therefore, likely allied to the \textit{SA-GAZ}), are those which were not permanently dispossessed either by Joshua\textsuperscript{251} or the early tribal efforts after the death of Joshua.\textsuperscript{252}

13th century fall of these cities. \textit{A propos} of Josh. 11:13, Yadin's recent report of the second season of excavations at Hazor is of interest (\textit{cf. Biblical Archaeologist}, XX, 1957, pp. 34 ff.). In addition to the latest Canaanite city which was destroyed in the 13th century (perhaps then, according to an early Exodus, in the days of Deborah, \textit{cf. Judges} 4 and 5), remains were found of a 14th century city "approximately in the el-Amarna period" (p. 44) and of an earlier city of the Middle Bronze Age which "was effectively destroyed by fire, most probably by one of the Egyptian pharaohs of the New Kingdom, Amenophis II or more probably Thutmose III" (p. 44). The supposition that a pharaoh of the New Kingdom captured Hazor is questionable; for in spite of their many campaigns into Canaan their ignorance of the techniques of siege warfare made the capture of a fortified city a rarity. But according to the early date of the Exodus, Joshua was a contemporary of Amenophis II and as for Hazor, "that did Joshua burn".

\textsuperscript{249} Josh. 14:7 and 10 indicate that the initial phase was completed within five years of the entry into Canaan.

\textsuperscript{250} \textit{Cf.}, e. g., Olmstead, \textit{History of Palestine and Syria} (New York, 1931), pp. 196-197; Meek, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{251} Joshua 10 and 11.

\textsuperscript{252} The situation at Shechem is problematic. Nothing is said about an Israelite conquest of central Palestine, but if the transaction of Joshua 24 implies Israelite control of Shechem, they subsequently lost their foothold, for Labaya ruled Shechem some thirty years after the Israelite entry (\textit{cf. EA} 289:22 ff.). Similarly, if Albright (\textit{BASOR} 87, 1942, p. 38) is correct that Debir became the seat of a local chieftain after the Amarna period, not only Joshua's raid but even Othniel's capture of that city (Josh. 15:15-17; \textit{cf. Judg.} 1:11 ff.) failed to be permanently effective. Again, though Joshua's raid had depopulated Lachish and Gezer, these cities fell again into Canaanite hands according to \textit{EA} 287:14-15, whether these lines mean that these cities had been assisting Pharaoh's enemies or
Albright has concluded that in southern Palestine of the Amarna period the main city-states were Gezer, Lachish, Jerusalem, and Hebron-Keilah. In the period of Joshua there are in this area five additional city-states: Jarmuth, Makkedah, Libnah, Debir, and Eglon, with still others like Jericho, Bethel and Gibeon nearby. Albright then theorizes that from c. 1375-1250 there had been a gradual reduction in the power of the city-states combined with an increase in their number, which he attributes to a settled Egyptian policy of divide et impera. This decrease in the power of the Canaanite city-states is then judged to have aided Israel in her Conquest. Indeed, this is seized upon as compelling evidence that the Hebrew Conquest was late.

It will be recognized that this reconstruction of the 14th century situation in southern Palestine is based in part on silences in the Amarna letters. Such a procedure is precarious, however, for the silences might readily be accounted for by the fact that the authors of the Amarna letters simply had no occasion to mention the towns in question. To the extent, however, that there may actually have been fewer city-states in the Amarna period than in Joshua's day, a more plausible explanation would be that between Joshua and the Amarna situation the Israelites had been encroaching on the territory of the old Canaanite city-states, reducing their number by conquest.

Furthermore, the spontaneous confederation of Canaanite kings described in Joshua 10 is difficult to explain if it be supposed that Joshua's campaigns were contemporary with or subsequent to the ha-BI-ru activity of the Amarna letters. For these letters graphically exhibit the mutual distrust and growing antagonism among the Canaanite kings during this period. Is it not apparent that neither in the midst of, nor soon after, such intrigues and civil strife could a king of Jerusalem so easily consolidate the surrounding city-states for were to provide for Pharaoh's archers. Such developments indicate that Israel's permanent acquisition of territory in Canaan was a gradual process only initiated by Joshua's campaigns.

253 Besides these, Jarmuth was a minor independency and an Egyptian garrison and official were stationed at Eglon. BASOR 87, 1942, pp. 37-38. Cf. Wright, op. cit., pp. 75, 76.
a joint military venture against a common foe? Abdi-Hepa's futile efforts during the struggle with the *ha-Bi-ru* is a witness that a king of Jerusalem would find such a task impossible. Again a more plausible reconstruction is that the collapse of the five-city alliance against Joshua terminated the southern confederation and prepared for the Canaanite disunity evidenced in the Amarna letters.

If Joshua is to be placed before the Amarna period, the problem still remains of synchronizing the later Israelite tribal efforts to take actual possession of their allotted inheritances (i.e., the Book of judges) with the Amarna *ha-BI-ru* movements. The arguments already presented against the possibility of identifying the *ha-BI-ru* with the Israelites of Joshua's day for the most part hold against any such identification at this point as well. However, in view of the known tendency of the authors of the Amarna letters to stigmatize the cause of all enemies (or at least all accused of disloyalty to Egypt) with the *SA-GAZ* label, we ought not to be too dogmatic in denying the possibility that some Hebrew activity might be hidden in the Amarna letters under that label.

More significant is the fact that on the chronology followed here the first oppression of Israel in Canaan falls in the late second and in the third decade of the 14th century B.C. This corresponds with part of the era of the *ha-BI-ru* in Canaan. Israel's first oppressor was "Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim". The area designated by "Aram Naharaim" would include within its southwestern limits the region about Alalah (and probably still farther south) which was a strong *ha-BI-ru* center in the 14th century B.C. Though styled

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254 Judg. 3:9-10.
255 part of this era corresponds to the career of Labaya which can be dated in the second and third decades of the 14th century on either Albright's or Knudtzon's reading of the date on the hieratic docket on Labaya's letter, *EA* 254.
256 Judg. 3:8. It is possible that the additional מֶשֶׁחָן, "double wickedness", was appended by Cushan's victims, perhaps as a pun on מַעֲשֹׁי. Cf. Burney, *The Book of Judges*, 1920, pp. 65-66.
melek, Cushan-rishathaim need not have been more than one strong chieftain among several in Aram Naharaim.  

Moreover, the name Cushan is attested in this area both as the name of a geographical district and as a personal name. That there was a district in northern Syria in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. called Qusana-ruma, is known from the list of Ramses III. Still more pertinent is the 15th century tablet from Alalah which contains the personal name ku-sa-an. This tablet is a fragment of a census list of unspecified purpose, on which 43 personal names remain along with the phrase found on the left edge, "owner of a chariot". The list then might well be one of the numerous military lists and probably includes the names of several maryannu.

Within the framework of synchronization proposed here for Hebrew and ha-BI-ru careers, it is difficult to dissociate the oppression of Israel by Cushan-rishathaim from the ha-BI-ru menace of the Amarna letters. The facts rather suggest that elements of the ha-BI-ru corps from Syria active in southern Canaan as the terror of the loyalist Canaanite city kings began in time to raid the settlements of the more recently arrived Israelites. The Israelites were becoming, like the Egyptians, too dominating a power in Palestine to suit the interests which the ha-BI-ru were engaged to further. It appears then that it was from plundering ha-BI-ru mercenaries that Othniel delivered oppressed Israel.

If so, the ha-BI-ru, certainly not the kin of Israel, were actually Israel's foe--the first oppressors of Israel in Canaan. And then, far from offering a Canaanite version of the Hebrew

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258 Such is the usage elsewhere in judges. Thus Jabin of Hazor is called "king of Canaan" (Judg. 4:2; cf. 4:23, 24), though he was but one of several Canaanite kings (cf. Judg. 5:19). So also, O'Callaghan, op. cit., p. 123.
260 Wiseman, AT 154.
261 Ibid., p. 140. 36 names end in -an (ibid., p. 10).
262 Since Othniel is associated with the south, this first oppression probably centered there.
march of conquest, the Amarna letters dealing with the  
ha-BI-ru are a Canaanite portrait of the first scourge employed  
by Yahweh to chastise the Israelites for their failure to  
prosecute the mandate of conquest.

It is not difficult to surmise what verdict the biblical  
historians would have given if they had left to us their inter-  
pretation of the data of the ha-BI-ru oppression of the  
theocratic people in the early 14th century and the almost  
total disappearance of the ha-Bl-ru as a social-political entity  
by about the close of that century. Surely they would have  
judged that the brief Amarna Age encounter with Israel was  
for the ha-Bl-ru a crucial hour of more than ordinary political  
decision. It was an encounter that sealed their destined fall.

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THE TEST OF ABRAHAM
GENESIS 22:1-19

JOHN I. LAWLOR

THE incredible story of the ordeal of Abraham and Isaac begins, presumably, with Abraham sojourning in the land of the Philistines (Gen 21:34) and concludes with Abraham, the main character in this drama, returning to Beer-sheba with the two young men and Isaac.\(^1\)

The pathos of this account is unequaled by any other portion of the Abraham sequence and perhaps the entire Pentateuchal tradition. The reader emotes with Abraham, for the entire story radiates great tensions, strong reactions, and human emotions. Skinner felt this, for he remarks that parts of it "... can hardly be read without tears."\(^2\)

The manner in which the narrative has been put together evidences great literary artistry. Two factors unite to make the case. First, the use of repetitious statements seems intentional. The use of one such repetitious statement in v 1 ("'Abraham!' And he said 'Here I am.'") and v 11 ("'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.'") naturally divides the story into two general movements. The use of another "... your son, your only son..." used three times (vv 2, 12, 16) tends to increase the gravity of the situation. Such redundancy creates great tension; it seems as if God almost strains to remind Abraham that the stakes are high. Such obvious repetition, it seems, is premeditated, perhaps for the purpose of raising the anxiety level of the reader. Still another, "So the two of them walked on together" (vv 6 and 8), puts the reader off; it also heightens the tension that builds toward the climax.

Second, there is a certain symmetry to the story which is, in part, achieved through the use of both triplets and tensions/resolutions. With respect to the former, the imperatives "take," "go," and "offer" (v 2) are a case in point. Vv 3, 6, and 10 are further examples.

\(^1\)The text is actually silent on the matter of Isaac's return to Beer-sheba with Abraham and the two young men; however, later episodes in the Abraham cycle have Abraham and Isaac together, a point which at least suggests his return with the rest.

Furthermore, the blessing formula of vv 17 and 18 appears as a triplet. With respect to the tensions/resolutions, several examples are apparent. The "only son" at the beginning is contrasted by the "greatly multiplied" seed at the conclusion. The initial command of God underscores the fact that the son whom Abraham was being called upon to offer was his only son. In one sense that was not true, for Ishmael was also his son. But he was the only son through whom the promises already given to Abraham could be realized. As the story closes, Abraham receives an emphatic enunciation of blessing (הָרְאֵהוָה הַבָּרָא) which would result in his "only son" being multiplied into descendants that would number "as the stars of the heavens and the sand which is on the seashore" (v 17). The text supplies the key element to the transition; v 16 says: ". . . because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son. . . ." The nature of the experience is initially described as a "test"; at the end it is turned into a "blessing." The crisis point of the story (v 10) divides the two motifs. The first half (vv 1-9) lays an emphasis upon the "testing" motif; the use of the term תֲסֹל in v 1 clearly signals this point. The רֹאֶה יְאָרֶת of v 17 confirms the blessing motif of the second half.

There is a sense in which the story begins with a child sacrifice motif, but in the second half of the narrative that fades and the concept of animal sacrifice surfaces. For this reason, it has been suggested that the purpose of the entire account is to present an etiology on animal sacrifice, and to set up a prohibition of child sacrifice.  

The employment of these various techniques not only improves the readability and interest level of the narrative, but also helps to generate meaning in one's understanding of the text. This point will be further discussed following a closer look at the text itself.

TEXT

An acquaintance with the text of the story seems to be the basis for an attempt to understand some of the concepts it is intending to communicate. The episode of Gen 22:1-19 reads like a two-act play, with both a prologue and an epilogue. The literary structure of the passage suggests the following arrangement of the material:

Prologue, 22: 1
Act I: Ordeal/Crisis, 22:2-10
  Scene 1, 22:2-5
  Scene 2, 22:6-10

That there is a conscious effort on the part of the writer to establish relationship between the Abraham cycle up to this point and the particular passage in focus seems evident from his opening statement: "Now it came about after these things. . . ."\(^4\) Its place in the saga of Abraham\(^5\) will be discussed later, so further detail is not necessary at this point. Suffice it to say that this opening line supplies an internal, textual connection to the preceding context, in addition to the more literary relationship presented in the later discussion.

An important observation is made by the writer at the outset of the narrative; it is an observation primarily for the benefit of the reader. The narrator is careful to explain that what he is about to describe represents a "test" (nānî) of Abraham. This not only informs the reader of an important point, but also seems to give some direction to the significance of the story. It is an account of a test of Abraham by his God. Testing in regard to what? For what purpose? The answers to these questions are to a certain extent inherent within the text, and will be considered later.

While Abraham's response to God's address, seen in v 1, is undoubtedly a normal one, its appearance both here and again in v 11 seems too obvious to be viewed merely as "accidental." As previously suggested, it functions as a "formulaic expression" which helps to shape the narrative.

\(^4\)This is a debated point. Von Rad says that "this narrative . . . has only a very loose connection with the preceding" (G. von Rad, Genesis; trans. J. H. Marks [OTL; revised edition; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972] 238; hereafter cited as von Rad, Genesis). However, Coats remarks: "A patriarchal itinerary scheme provides context for this story. . . . Unity with the context derives, however, not simply from structural context provided by an itinerary pattern, but of more importance, from unity in theological perspective with other Abrahamic tradition" (G. W. Coats, "Abraham's Sacrifice of Faith: A Form-Critical Study of Genesis 22," Int 27 [1973] 392; hereafter cited as Coats, "Abraham's Sacrifice").

Act I: Ordeal/Crisis. 22:2-10

The main body of the narrative reads like a two-act drama, vv 2-10 forming the first act which has two scenes, vv 2-5 and vv 6-10. Act I, Scene 1 (vv 2-5) conveys the basic instructions given to Abraham along with his initial response. In "rapid-fire" succession the three imperatives ("take," הָקַב; "go," הָלַך; "offer," הָשַׁבְּתָהְבִּים) of v 2 inform Abraham what it is that God expects of him. This is the test. Both the "hard-hitting" style of the divine instructions as well as the content of the instructions surface an issue that is perhaps one that the story is intended to explore. What is the nature of Abraham's God? Twice (cf. Genesis 12) he has instructed Abraham to take certain actions which would result in close family ties being broken. What is of almost equal amazement is the relative passivity, the "cool detachment" with which Abraham is seen to respond. By two sets of triads the writer methodically records the calculated actions of the patriarch: he "rose early" (��קיוו), "saddled his donkey" (עָבֶד), "took lads" (נֶסֶך), and "split wood" (עַשָּׂר), "arose" (נֶסֶך), and "went" (לָוָא).

Upon arriving at a place that was within eyesight of the destination (v 4), Abraham utters a statement that is most intriguing: "Stay here. . . I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you." The first person plural verbs "worship" and "return to you" (שָׂרָה) raise an important question: Was this a hollow, evasive comment on Abraham's part, or was it an expression of an honest faith which he genuinely possessed, based upon the promises which led up to and culminated in the birth of the son whose life was now seemingly in jeopardy? Perhaps the reader is to see some correlation between the manner in which Abraham responded to the divine directive and the statement in question.

Scene 2 (vv 6-10) of this portion of the narrative brings about an intense heightening of the tension; this is accomplished both through the development of the sequence of events as well as the various literary techniques employed by the writer to describe the sequence of events. As now seems characteristic of the writer, another triplet is employed in v 6: Abraham "took the wood" (נֶסֶך), "laid it on Isaac" (מָשָּׁה), and "took. . . the fire and the knife" (עַשָּׂר). The reader is then put off by the interlude: "So the two of them walked on together." It is a statement which seems designed to continue the account, but more so to allow the anxiety level of the reader an opportunity to level off momentarily before introducing the next build-up of tension.

There are two possible approaches to the dialogue between father and son of vv 7 and 8 -- the only recorded conversation between Abraham and Isaac in the entire story. The more traditional view
takes this, together with the "prediction" of v 5, as an evidence of Abraham's growing faith in his God and that he was expressing his firm belief that Isaac would either be spared or miraculously raised up, a la Heb 11:17-19. As one reviews the complete saga of Abraham, it is to be recognized that several indications of an "evolving faith" on the part of Abraham do appear; this may be cited in support of the understanding just referred to. On the other hand, however, many regard this as an "unconscious prophecy" by Abraham, a statement which in actuality was intended either to evade the question or to deceive the son.6 Again, it is true that deception was a part of Abraham's way of dealing with crisis situations (cf. Gen 12:10-20 and Gen 20:1-18). However, that this was a situation in which the truth could not be long withheld from Isaac must be kept in mind. This fact raises a question as to whether or not deception was even a viable option for the patriarch. Perhaps it is true that Abraham was trying to side-step the question and in so doing gave an answer which gave Isaac no cause for alarm yet in the end became reality.

The second use of the formulaic expression, "So the two of them walked on together," gives the reader an opportunity to prepare for the climax.

Father and son arrive at the appointed place. The slow, deliberate, calculated, blow-by-blow description of events at this point is most impressive, "The details are noted with frightful accuracy," says von Rad.7 However, not only is the reader impressed by the manner of description, he is also impressed by what is not said or what is only implied. The writer alludes to the passivity of Abraham in binding Isaac; that is accomplished by the lack of any particular emphasis being placed on that part of the description. Yet nothing is said about Isaac's conduct. The implied non-resistance of the son along with the willingness of the father suggest the idea that there was a commitment to the belief that God had the absolute right to make this demand upon both.

The narrative of v 10 is a continuation of the previous verse; this is seen in the fact that the long string of waw consecutives continues. Another triad is employed at the peak of the description of the crisis, individual details at this point characterize the description: "... he stretched out his hand and took the knife. ..." At the very peak of the story a noticeable change in the descriptive method takes place, a change which seems to serve as a mediating factor between some of the binary elements which are found on either side of the crisis point.

6Von Rad, Genesis, 241; Coats, "Abraham's Sacrifice," 394.
7Von Rad, Genesis, 241.
A "string" of imperfects, apparently based upon the perfect of v 1 (וָאָבָא) characterizes the account up to this point. While the change at this point to the infinitive, וָאֶפְרָאֵלָה, is necessitated by the fact that he did not, in fact, slay his son, it also seems to denote inner disposition. He fully intended to carry through with the action initially required. For all intents and purposes, Isaac had been slain.

Act II: Resolution, 22:11-18

The intervention by the angel of YHWH, which is seen in Scene 1 (vv 11-14), is a welcome turn of events. In spite of the opening statement of the story, the reader tends to wonder by the time he reaches v 10, whether God was actually going to let Abraham carry out his intention. Though great relief is experienced by the reader and presumably Abraham, the patriarch, nevertheless, continues to act in the same "restrained" manner as before. Crenshaw remarks: "Most astonishingly, we do not hear a word of rejoicing when the ordeal is ended by an urgent command. . . ." For the first time he notices the ram, he retrieves it, and offers it in place of his son. There is no hint that this sacrifice was rendered in response to divine directive.

A good example of paronomasia is evident at this point in the narrative. In response to Isaac's question, Abraham had responded, "'elohim yir'eh." According to v 14, Abraham called the name of the A place "ywhh yir'eh." To add to this, the comment of the angel is noteworthy: "... I know that you fear God..." (yre' 'elohim) (v 12). This latter comment by the angel signals an important link to the statement of purpose for the testing.

Scene 2, vv 15-18, records the divine response to the now proven patriarch. That the blessing pronounced in vv 17-18 is directly related to Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac is clearly established by the redundant expression of v 16: "... because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son. ..." The announcement of the blessing is presented in the now characteristic style of the writer, another triad. The blessing formula which appears in the narrative is not entirely new to the Abraham cycle (cf. Genesis 12, 15, 17). However, the form in which it is seen here is somewhat intensified over previous similar formulas. As an example, the "I will bless you" (גֵּרְשִׁי) of Gen 12:2 now becomes "I will greatly bless you"
(דָּוִד הַבְּרֵכֵי), Gen 22: 17. As Speiser suggests, the promise that Abraham's descendants would "... possess the gate of their enemies ..." (v 17) "... refers to capture of the opponent's administrative and military centers." A similar blessing was invoked upon Rebekah by her brothers prior to her departure for Canaan to become the wife of Isaac (cf. Gen 24:60).

Epilogue, 22:19

The notice that "Abraham returned to his young men" and that together they returned to Beer-sheba is of special interest because of what it does not say. Rather obvious is the complete lack of any reference to Isaac in this epilogue. There is no clear indication that he returned with his father; neither is there any clear indication that he remained at Moriah. The text is silent. For this reason Crenshaw refers to this as the "Journey into Oblivion." This fact seems to point the reader's attention toward Abraham rather than Isaac, and justifiably so, for this is not a story of the sacrifice of Isaac, it is the story of the testing and obedience of Abraham.

PURPOSE/INTENT

It is doubtful that anyone would deny the moving nature of this account, but what contribution does it make to the Abraham cycle in particular and to Hebrew thought in general? How does it make that contribution? It is not only important to discover the meaning, but also to discover how it has meaning. The narrative of Genesis 22 conveys meaning as it is read both diachronically and synchronically: diachronically, it seems to take on meaning as it is seen as the climax to the Abraham cycle; synchronically, it generates meaning as it is viewed as a paradigm on certain sociological issues.

The relationship of this incident to the entire Abraham cycle

One's appreciation of this moving account is increased when it is viewed diachronically in the light of the entire Abraham cycle: Gen 11:27-25:11. It appears as the climax to the saga of Abraham. All that precedes this event leads up to it; what follows almost seems anticlimactic. The introduction to the Abraham cycle (Gen 11:27-30) emphasizes the point that Sarai, Abram's wife, is barren. After long years of barrenness, anxiety and struggling, a son is born to Abraham and Sarah (Gen 21:1-7). Almost as though with a vengeance, the saga leaps over several years and hastens to the story which portrays the

11Crenshaw, "Journey," 245.
fruit of the once barren womb as being in grave danger. However, it is not just a son who is in danger; it is an entire future, a potential nation. All that Abraham had lived for is suddenly at stake. If his God's word is to be believed, all the nations of the earth would somehow be affected by this demanding order. Either way Abraham might respond, it appeared as though the covenant was in danger. If he were to disobey, the covenant may be in jeopardy; on the other hand, if he were to obey God and slay Isaac, the covenant likewise stood in jeopardy. Abraham, indeed, was on the horns of a dilemma; and the demands that were placed upon him placed him in a situation in which it appeared that he could not win.

When viewed as a whole the Abraham cycle is a study in progression, development, maturing. Perhaps as a regular reminder that the patriarch is very human, there appear stories, strategically located, which clearly portray his vulnerability. While these accounts are in no way to be minimized, the overall trend of the saga is upward; each segment seems to build upon and add to the previous ones. A call and promise are issued, to which there is response (Gen 12:1-9); Abram demonstrates graciousness to Lot (Gen 13:1-13), after which Jehovah appears to him and reiterates the promise (Gen 13:14-18). In turn, Abram spares Lot (Gen 14:1-16); later, the promise is formalized as a binding covenant (Gen 15:1-21). The covenant is expanded (Gen 17:1-21) and sealed by circumcision (Gen 17:22-26). The seed aspect of the covenant is particularized (Gen 18:1-15); Abraham intercedes for Lot (Gen 18:16-33). At last the promised son is born (Gen 21:1-7).

The sequence of these events suggests that both Abraham and the reader are being prepared for something. The cycle is going somewhere; it is not static. At almost any point along the way, the reader can stop, look behind him, and see that the plot has advanced; Abraham has progressed. Difficult circumstances have consistently presented themselves, and at times the patriarch has reacted in a very immature and deceitful manner. Yet overall, the relationship of these individual stories one to another makes the point that Abraham was "growing up."

Then comes the ordeal. One is inclined to believe that had such a sore test come earlier in his experience, Abraham would not have been able to cope with it. Hence, the climax of the cycle comes and with it the most formidable test of the patriarch's life: God orders

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12 The amount of time between the birth of Isaac and the Genesis 22 incident is unknown; estimates seem to range from 7-25 years. The term employed here, רָבָּן, is no real help in that it is used in reference to an unborn son (Judg 13:5, 7, 8, 12) as well as the sons of Samuel who were ministering in the Tabernacle (1 Sam 2:17). Gen 21:34 says, "And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days."
him to slay his long-awaited son. The nature of the test and the manner in which Abraham faced it are issues which are taken up in the following portions of the study. Suffice it to say here that there seems to be some evidence that this event marked a change in the patriarch's life.

**What the term הָעִ֛שָּׁה contributes to the narrative**

That the narrator is so careful to introduce his account as a "test" is both obvious and important. It is obvious because it is the first statement employed by the writer in this narrative sequence. The importance of this point is seen in several different ways. First, it is important for the reader's benefit. So it was viewed by the writer, for he informs the reader from the very outset that this is "only a test." Abraham, of course, was not privy to that information. The reason for that appears obvious. It would not have been a genuine test if he had been informed that it was "only a test." Nothing would have been proven through it, had he known.

Second, it is important because it contributes to one's understanding of the God-man relationship; specifically, it gives insight into an apparently new dynamic in the Elohim/Yahweh-Abraham cycle. This is the first, and the only, time in the Abraham saga where the nature of a particular event is so labeled. Nevertheless, its use here suggests that from Yahweh's perspective, Abraham needed to be tested.13 There is no clear indication why He deemed such a test necessary; only that He did. No unusually troublesome flaws in Abraham's character have been brought to the surface up to this point. On the contrary, Yahweh appears to have looked with favor upon the patriarch.14

With no clear explanation of this question coming from the text itself, one is left to offer several possibilities for consideration.15 One possibility is that the test is a clear indication of the somewhat tyrannical nature of Abraham's God. Yahweh, a young, ambitious deity, was perhaps attempting to demonstrate his rather cynical

13Crenshaw makes the following thought-provoking remarks: "In a sense the story bears the character of a qualifying test. The fulfillment of the promise articulated in Genesis 12 and reaffirmed at crucial stages during Abraham's journey through alien territory actualizes the divine intention to bless all nations by means of one man. Abraham's excessive love for the son of promise comes dangerously close to idolatry and frustrates the larger mission. Thus is set the stage for the qualifying test." Crenshaw, "Journey," 249.

14That this is true is evidenced by the initial promises of Gen 12:1-3, the formalizing of the promises into a covenant in Genesis 15, the statement that "Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness" (Gen 15:6), the fulfillment of the promise of a son, the manifold blessings of Yahweh on Abraham, et al.
attitude toward one of his subjects/devotees. In this writer's opinion, to establish such a suggestion as legitimate would require much more evidence than this one passage can be construed to present. Another suggestion is that the key to understanding the reason behind the test is to be found in a study of the term הָנָשֵׁה, which the writer employs. This suggestion brings our attention back to the original point regarding the importance of the identification of this as a "testing" experience by the writer.

A third reason why the writer's opening statement is important, therefore, is that it may hold the key to understanding the reason why God tested Abraham as he did. The term הָנָשֵׁה is employed, in addition to the usage in Genesis 22, eight other times in a context where Elohim/Yahweh is said to be the "tester." In six (Exod 15:22-26; 16:4; 20:18-20; Deut 8:2,16; Judg 2:21-22; 3:1-4) of these cases, Israel was the object of His testing; in 2 Chron 32:31 Hezekiah, king of Judah, was the one tested; in Ps 26:2 David appealed to Yahweh to test him. In five of the six cases where Yahweh/Elohim speaks of "testing" Israel, the context of each clearly shows a relationship between the motif of "testing" and his concern over the nation's obedience to his commandments/statutes/law/ways. In Exod 20:18-obedience concept is implied though not specifically stated, and interestingly enough, the subject of the nation's fear of God is a central issue, as it is in Gen 22:1, 12. Again in the Ps 26:2 occurrence of the term, the obedience concept is implied when David says: "Prove me, a Lord, and try (הָנָשֵׁה) me; test my heart and my mind." Of Hezekiah, the Chronicler observes:

And so in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to himself, in order to try him and to know all that was in his heart (2 Chron 32:31).

If the pattern seen in the use of the term הָנָשֵׁה, when Yahweh/Elohim is said to be the "tester," can serve as a legitimate key for understanding its use in Gen 22:1, then one may conclude that the reason Yahweh deemed it necessary to test Abraham was to know what was in his heart, to test his obedience to and fear of Yahweh when his promised and beloved son was at stake.


Exploring relationships

One of the functions of this particular story seems to be that of exploring relationships: relationships between man and his God as well as relationships between a father and his sons. Both of these areas of investigation are in themselves fairly complex. An attempt will be made here to probe both realms in an effort to understand the dynamics involved in these two areas of relationships. The latter one seems to be the result of or the outgrowth of the former; therefore, they will be analyzed in the same order as they have initially been mentioned.

The God/man relationship is explored at different levels in this narrative. The images of both God and man are studied to some degree; the demands of God are seen in contrast to the response of man. Fundamental to the account is an obvious question: "What kind of a God would subject a man to such an ordeal?" This, of course, immediately raises the whole issue of the image of God as seen in Genesis 22. Responses to the question vary. In large measure one's response depends upon which aspect of the narrative is emphasized. If the emphasis is upon the initial command to sacrifice Isaac and the concept of the divine deception involved, the view of the image of God obviously will be somewhat negative. On the other hand, if the emphasis is placed upon the fact that Yahweh stayed the hand of Abraham and subsequently increased his blessing upon the patriarch, one's conclusions concerning the image of God would agree with de Vaux, who commented: "Any Israelite who heard this story would take it to mean that his race owed its existence to the mercy of God, and its prosperity to the obedience of their great ancestor."17

More, however, is to be gained by viewing the image of God as portrayed in Gen 22:1-10 in a broader context. When seen in the perspective of both that which precedes and follows these verses, a noticeable "role reversal" occurs in this problematic section. In Genesis 12-21 Yahweh is depicted as the deity who desires to bless greatly the patriarch; the promises abound in these chapters. Not only is he seen as one who promises blessing; he is unmistakably set forth as the one who fulfills the promised blessings. Genesis 21 records the birth of the son of promise, Isaac. Suddenly, a reversal of roles occurs. The God of promise and blessing appears to become the antagonist, the tyrant, the adversary, the God of contradiction. In the minds of some, the problem is not so much in the initial demand

which Yahweh/Elohim made on Abraham as with the fact that he allowed Abraham to think right up to the very last moment that he was actually serious when in fact he was only testing Abraham.

Just as the careful student of the saga of Abraham must see the role reversal just described, he is also obliged to see another drastic reversal in Gen 22: 11-18 -- a reversal in the portrayal of the image of God back to that which prevails in Genesis 12-21. This second reversal sheds a different light on the first reversal. Certainly there should be no attempt to minimize the image of Yahweh in Gen 22:1-10. There is no question that a "different side" of Yahweh is to be seen there. At the same time, however, one must reckon with the double role-reversal which is evident in the story. But, as demonstrated elsewhere in this study, Yahweh/Elohim is to be understood as a God who sorely tests his subjects. According to Exodus 15, Israel needed water; in Exodus 16 and Deuteronomy 8, the nation needed bread; Judges 2 and 3 suggest that the nation needed military assistance. While the exact circumstances differ in the Genesis 22 incident, the basic point is the same. Yahweh/Elohim is set forth by the biblical writers as a God who takes his servants through perilous situations for the purpose of testing them. In almost every one of these examples, including Genesis 22, there is evidence of divine provision as a means of survival through the experience. This is not at all unusual in the realm of religion. The religions of the ancient Near East were characterized by deities who demanded devotion; in some cases demonstration of one's devotion was evidenced through child sacrifice. The unique feature in Abraham's experience was that his God stopped him from completing the act. Thus the double role-reversal shows itself to be significant in the story.

A second fundamental question must be asked concerning the story: "What kind of a man would respond to such a command in the manner in which Abraham did?" Almost as important as the image-of-God motif is the image of man in relationship to his God as it is explored in this fascinating account. Once again, there is difference of opinion on this question. In fact, the same individual sometimes experiences mixed emotions in this regard, as Kierkegaard demonstrates:

Why then did Abraham do it? For God's sake and (in complete identity with this) for his own sake. He did it for God's sake because God required this proof of his faith; for his own sake he did it in order that he might furnish the proof. The unity of these two points of view is perfectly expressed by the word which has always been used to characterize this situation: It is a trial, a temptation. A temptation - but what does that mean? What ordinarily tempts a man is that which would keep him from doing his duty, but in this case the temptation is itself the ethical... which would keep him from doing God's will.
Therefore, though Abraham arouses my admiration, he at the same time appalls me. . . . He who has explained this riddle has explained my life.18

An interesting and perhaps significant ingredient is to be gleaned by tracing the role-reversal pattern in the case of Abraham. With one major exception, it is opposite that of Yahweh/Elohim's. It is not at all unusual to find Abraham arguing with Elohim throughout Genesis 12-21. Whereas in that segment of the cycle God is the "bless'er," Abraham is somewhat the "antagonist." However in Genesis 22, where he is called upon to do something of a far more severe nature than anything else up to this point, a clear reversal is seen. He does not argue with God, in spite of the fact that to obey would mean the death of his long-awaited and dearly loved and favored son. There is no hint even of any hesitancy on Abraham's part, though to actually follow through would place the covenant in jeopardy in addition to suffering the loss of his son. How is this phenomenon to be explained? Does his response represent a "blind obedience," which in present times seems to have been operative to some degree in Jonestown, Guyana? Or does his response indicate that he had reached a level of maturity and obedience which enabled him to carry out God's instructions and at the same time leave the consequences to God? In answer to this perplexing problem, it may be significant to note that there is no evidence in Genesis 22, or in the remainder of the Abraham cycle, of a reversal back to the image which characterized Abraham prior to the Genesis 22 incident. It is true that there is no strong or positive evidence in the rest of the Abraham saga that he was a "different Abraham" from this point on. However, the failure of the text of the cycle to allude to a second role reversal may be significant in this respect.

Further evidence that the tale seems to be exploring relationships between God and man is the heavy emphasis which is placed upon testing/obedience and fear of God/love of son. It seems quite apparent that there is a direct relationship between the discussion concerning the image of God/image of man and testing/obedience as well as fear of God/love of son. Both of these latter issues seem to be engaged at a level different from the former matter. Allusion has already been made to the fact that the writers of the OT portray Yahweh as a God who tested his subjects. That is not so unusual or surprising. Abraham's unflinching obedience is somewhat more puzzling. He appears as a man who believed that the God whom he

worshipped had the right to make such a demand of him and that the
sacrifice of Isaac was the right thing for him.

It seems significant that both comparisons and contrasts can be
drawn between this experience and Abraham's initial encounter with
Yahweh, as told in Gen 12:1ff. Both experiences began with a divine
emphatic imperative, "go." Both situations involved going to an
"undesignated place": "... to the land that I will show you" (Gen
12:1); "... upon one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Gen
22:2). In both cases a "sacrifice of family" was required: in the former
experience, it was to leave family behind; in the latter, it was an
actual sacrifice of his son. This final confrontation by Yahweh was, in
a sense, not a completely new experience for the patriarch, although
obviously the most trying. Abraham's entire experience with Yahweh,
beginning with the initial call and promise, may be viewed as pre-
paring him for this final, supreme test. While the general direction of
Abraham's response in both cases was toward obedience, in the first
situation there was only partial obedience, while in the last situation
there was total obedience. This fact "puts a little distance" between
the two experiences. The major contrast, of course, between the two
is the fact that the first imperative was accompanied by a promise of
blessing; there was no such promise which came with the imperative
of Gen 22:2. In fact, this latter imperative seemed to place all the
foregoing promises in jeopardy. This set of facts greatly increases the
distance between the two situations. But that distance is then reduced
by the fact that both responses are followed by blessing from Yahweh.
Sarna, commenting on a comparative study of these two passages,
draws some conclusions which deserve consideration because they
relate the study to the matter of exploring the relationship between
Yahweh and the patriarch:

The great difference between the two events is what constitutes the
measure of Abraham's progress in his relationship to God. The first
divine communication carried with it the promise of reward: The final
one held no such expectation. On the contrary, by its very nature it
could mean nothing less than the complete nullification of the covenant

19The form is יִּֽלָּלָל. Cassuto remarks that this form "... is not without specific
(signification.) He further observes: "In both cases Abram undergoes an ordeal: here he
has to leave behind his aged father and his environment and go to a country that is
unknown to him; there he has to take leave of his family circle for a little while, and of
his cherished son forever; his son, it is true, will accompany him for the first part of the
way but only so that he might bid him farewell forever. Thereafter he must go on his
way alone, the way of absolute discipline and devotion. In both instances the test is made
closer by the fact that the destination of the journey is not stated beforehand."
Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part II: From Noah to Abraham; trans.
and the frustration forever of all hope of posterity. Ishmael had already departed. Now Isaac would be gone, too. Tradition has rightly seen in Abraham the exemplar of steadfast, disinterested loyalty to God.20

A third level of interest in regard to the Yahweh/man relationship is the set of binary elements: fear of God/love of son. There appears to be something of a relationship between this and the testing/obedience motif, yet the fear of God/love of son struggle goes beyond or becomes more particularized than the former. Gen 22:2 sets up the frustration by the way in which Yahweh referred to Isaac, "... your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love." At the point where the angel stops Abraham, the clear pronouncement is made, "... now I know that you fear God..." (Gen 22:12). The implication seems to be that the fear of God on Abraham's part was in question because of his love for his son. Two factors in the text unite to mediate between these two elements. The description of the raised knife in the hand of the patriarch together with the writer's employment of the infinitive מָשַׁלְתֶּךָ clearly indicates Abraham's intention of slaying his son. An inner disposition reduces the distance between Abraham's fear of God and love of Isaac.

A second major realm of relationships is explored through this narrative: a horizontal realm. The relationship of a father to his sons is a theme that is investigated. At this point it is instructive to place two incidents side-by-side. The expulsion of Ishmael, as recorded in Genesis 21, and the binding of Isaac, described in Genesis 22, lead to an interesting study in comparisons and contrasts when analyzed together. Generally speaking, these two segments of the Abraham cycle illustrate the pattern, seen often in the OT, of the younger son becoming the favored son over the firstborn.21 As a matter of fact, this case sets the pace for those which follow in the patriarchal sequence. Ishmael, the result of Abraham's attempt to "help God fulfill His promise," was rejected by Yahweh and eventually expelled by Abraham. Isaac, the younger of the two sons, is described as having been sovereignly chosen by Yahweh and favored by Abraham. This, in itself, is not foreign to the biblical record; but the paradox is seen in the fact that Abraham became quite distressed over Sarah's instructions to cast Hagar and Ishmael out, yet when God instructed him to slay Isaac, the favored son, there was no evidence of any reluctance whatsoever on the father's part.

21See Genesis 27 (Jacob) and Genesis 37 (Joseph).
A number of interesting comparisons and contrasts can be observed between the two events. The following chart summarizes the main details:

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<tr>
<th><strong>ISMAEL IN DANGER</strong></th>
<th><strong>ISAAC IN DANGER</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GENESIS 21</strong></td>
<td><strong>GENESIS 22</strong></td>
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**CONTRASTS.**

- Crisis created as a result of a human directive: Sarah tells Abraham to cast out Hagar and Ishmael (v 10)
- Abraham shows real reluctance to follow through (v 11)
- God refers to Ishmael as "Abraham's seed," הָעֵד (v 13)
- Sarah aware of the circumstances; she was the "perpetrator" (vv 9-10)
- Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, could not stand to watch her son die (vv 15-16)
- Action takes place in the wilderness of Beer-sheba (v 14)

- Crisis created as a result of a divine directive: God tells Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering (v 2)
- Abraham shows no real reluctance to follow through (vv 3ff.)
- God refers to Isaac as "Abraham's son," יִשְׂרָאֵל (v 2)
- Sarah apparently not aware of the circumstances
- Abraham, the father of Isaac, did not shrink from observing (in fact, participating in) the death of his son
- Action takes place in the land of Moriah (vv 2-4)

**COMPARISONS.**

- Firstborn cast out, becomes a nation
- God promised to make a nation of Ishmael because he was Abraham's seed (v 13)
- Abraham "rose up early in the morning" to follow through (v 14)
- Divine intervention occurs; angel of God calls out to Hagar; reversal of danger (v 17)

- Firstborn cast out, becomes a great nation
- God promised to make a great nation of Isaac because Abraham had not withheld him (vv 16-18)
- Abraham "rose up early in the morning" to follow through (v 3)
- Divine intervention occurs; angel of Yahweh calls out to Abraham; reversal of danger (vv 11 ff.)
CONCLUSION

It seems apparent that one of the themes that the story presents as it is read diachronically is the testing and obedience of Abraham. That concept keeps reappearing in several different ways. That is not meant to imply that this diachronic motif exhausts the contribution of this celebrated story. One is inclined to ask the question: Is it really possible, on the basis of the details of the story as they are given, to know what was going on in the heart and mind of the patriarch? What do his unusual reactions mean?

In the synchronic direction, the account contributes to the exploration of certain religious and sociological relationships: God/man and father/son. But is there more? After some fairly extensive study, looking at the passage in many different ways and from several perspectives, it is obvious that the passage warrants further attention.

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Sacrificing Our Future  
(Genesis 22)  

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Introduction  
Not inappropriately, the story of Abraham being called to sacrifice Isaac is titled by Elie Wiesel "Isaac, a survivor's story."\(^1\) If we were to question people in the pew concerning the ultimate value in life, after the expected pious answers, many would finally (and perhaps most honestly) answer: life itself. Survival is a dominant factor in our modern world. However, the importance of survival is not a new phenomenon. In one of the better known wisdom tales from Egypt The Dispute of a man with his Ba, we overhear a dialogue between a man contemplating suicide and his inner being. As the man marshals arguments favoring suicide, the inner being counters with arguments against suicide. After extended discussion, the debate is finally won by the inner being with the argument that life, namely this life, is a known entity--and the known is always preferable to the unknown! Even we who claim a confidence regarding the future can understand such thinking, for in our lives we have known that anxiety concerning the future. For many of us, to survive is preferable to loss of life. Because of this, Genesis 22 makes us uncomfortable, for it presents us with a reality at odds with the dominant world view. 

However, this passage may also make us uncomfortable because of its disharmony with modern religion. We live in a religious society in which virtually all talk centers on what God can and will do for us. God the giver dominates our religious scene. (This is most clearly manifested in the popularity of such programs as PTL and the 700 Club.) Little, if any, talk discusses the demanding God. In response, modification of a famous charge is most appropriate: "Ask not what your God can do for you; ask what you can do for your God."

In this context, the message of Genesis 22 must be heard. The passage throbs with drama, for it contains the stuff of which life is made. It treats fear and faith; it pulsates with conflict--conflict of the past, present, and future; of faith and justice; of obedience and defiance; of freedom and sacrifice.

\(^1\) Messengers of God (Summit Books, 1976), p. 69.
We cannot help being struck with the pathos of this account. If we are honest, we read this account with fear and anxiety (even though we know the outcome), for it raises nagging questions which continue to haunt us. What kind of father would seriously consider killing his son? What kind of God would ask of a father the murder of his son? The pathos is heightened as the account progresses. Three times the term "together" (vss. 6, 8, 19) appears. Each successive movement is charged with drama, from the saddling of the pack animal to the splitting of the wood to the long, wordless trip. The anguish comes to a crescendo as the son and his father journey alone the final leg of the trek, the son with the wood for his own sacrificial fire and the father with the flint and knife. As E. Speiser has so aptly stated, "... 'and the two walked on together,' (8) covers what is perhaps the most poignant and eloquent silence in all literature."\(^2\)

Never was so much and so little said. Soren Kierkegaard, in *Fear and Trembling*, attempts to delve into the "conversation" (or lack of it) between Abraham and Isaac as they journeyed on alone to Mt. Moriah. Kierkegaard struggles with the dilemmas presented in this story and rightly concludes that we too quickly solve the dilemma through abstraction and moralization. To say "the great thing was that Abraham loved God so much that he was willing to sacrifice to him the best remains a problem when we concretize the account once again and realize that the best is his own son!"\(^3\)

And yet, if we can get beyond the initial repulsion of a father being called to sacrifice his son, we discover that this passage involves in reality a much larger issue. For in ancient Hebrew mentality, Abraham is being called to sacrifice more than just his son; he is really being called to sacrifice himself, his very future. For Abraham, this was a call to end his story, to end the promise he had embraced in faith. Isaac was more than just the child of Abraham's old age; he was the only link to that far-off goal to which Abraham's life was dedicated.\(^4\) And so, if we read the story aright, we can only agonize with Abraham as he comes to grips with the reality that the God in whom he has put his hopes is in fact calling in the very substance of his hope. For some inexplicable reason, God is recalling the heart of the promise.

\(^2\) *Genesis* (AB Doubleday, 1964), 164-165.

\(^3\) As Kierkegaard (Fear and Trembling [Princeton Univ. Press, 1941], 36) states: And there he stood, the old man, with his only hope! He knew that God Almighty was trying him ... and that it was the hardest sacrifice that could be required of him ... but that no sacrifice was too hard when God required it-and he drew the knife.

\(^4\) Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 164.
And yet as we shrink back at the intensity of this account, we remember that in a very real sense this issue has been central to Abraham's life from the beginning. The issue of obedience (or as Breuggemann would call it, "embracing the promise") is central in the accounts treating Abraham. Whereas this incident is the climax of the issue, in a sense Genesis 22 simply epitomizes the extended relationship of God and Abraham. We see in Verses 1-12 a movement in the relationship between God and Abraham, a movement revealed in two ways: (1) "take your son, your only son Isaac" ... (vs. 2) "you have not withheld your son, your only son."(vs. 12) (2) "God tested Abraham ..."(vs. 1) "for now I know that you fear God" (vs. 12). At the center of this movement is the affirmation in Verse 8 ("God will provide"). Verse 8 provides both movement and disclosure.6

The New Testament Perspective

We may be tempted as New Testament Christians to smugly dismiss this ancient text as a somewhat embarrassing reminder of an era plagued with barbarity. However, if we are honest, there are passages in the New Testament which should terrify us as much as Genesis 22. Mark 8:31-38 is such an example. Surely we shrink back as we seriously contemplate the call to follow and to emulate a crucified Messiah!

In Mark 8,7 we see the question of Jesus' identity intimately related to the question of his disciples' identity and call. In the confrontation between Peter and Jesus, Peter rebukes Jesus for his inappropriate definition of Messiah. Jesus responds that to profess "Christ" is to relinquish any right to define what "Christ" means. Disciples are not to guide, protect, or possess Jesus; they are to follow him. Thus we see a movement in this passage from the issue of "who Jesus is" to "what being Christ means" to "what being a disciple means."

This passage demands the utmost from us, for we are called to sacrifice everything that would insure our own vision, our own sense of our future. Just as Jesus left (sacrificed) everything (his family, possessions) for the cause of God, so we are called to sacrifice our future. The invitation of Jesus to us strikingly resembles God's call to Abraham. The call to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow Jesus is a call to give up our future.

5 Genesis (John Knox, 1982).
6 As Brueggemann (Genesis, p. 187) states: We do not know why God claims the son in the first place nor finally why he will remove the demand at the end. Between the two statements of divine inscrutability stands verse 8, offering the deepest mystery of human faith and pathos.
The call is not to deny ourselves something, but to deny ourselves. This is the great paradox of the call. It attacks the fundamental assumption of our human existence. We can never possess our own life! The significance of the passage lies in its paradox. I learn who I am by discovering who Jesus is; the way to self-fulfillment is the way of self-denial. As D. Bonhoeffer so aptly stated, "When Jesus calls a man, he bids him come and die."

He [Jesus] begins with a condition: "If anyone wants to come after me . . ." The condition is gracious in its openness.... It is expressed in three phrases: "let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." The symmetry of this offer with the vocation of Jesus is obvious. His vocation must become the vocation of those who name him "The Christ," . . . Taking up one's cross is not a pious interpretation of the usual woes of mortality as "the cross we have to bear." All these notions can be thought and enacted apart from Jesus. The call rather means that Jesus is to become the disciples' passion. It is the exposition of the only authentic sense in which one can say to him, "You are the Christ." It is the possibility of a new state of being in which one can say, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me . . ."(Gal. 2:20)

The cross in the call of Jesus makes it a contradiction of the best human wisdom and a threat to the basic human instinct. Who can want to choose crucifixion of the self, when the will of man is set on saving his own life from whatever threatens or on finding some savior in whose power to take refuge? In four interdependent sayings Jesus attacks the essential assumptions of human existence in an appeal to the will of those he confronts. Expressed in each saying is the core wisdom of faith in God: A person can never possess his own life. One cannot enact or fulfill it as an expression of the sovereign self.⁸

Conclusion

Genesis 22 deals with something much larger than child sacrifice. It treats the issue of response to a giving God who also demands. It issues a call to Abraham to relinquish the gift of promise. The call to sacrifice goes to the core of Abraham's existence. It is a call to see the gift of promise for what it truly is--pure gift.

⁸ Ibid.: 177-178.
However, this passage is not simply about God and Abraham. In it Israel, saw the story of her own relationship with God. Israel could see her own existence as solely a gift from her gracious God. She who had been "no people" had been brought from death to life by a freely saving God. However, Israel learned that the God who is graciously faithful is also incredibly demanding, and she was forced repeatedly to renew her commitment to this demanding God who allows no rivals. In hearing Genesis 22, Israel was reminded that her giving God was a God demanding undivided loyalty.

In like manner, we are called by the same God. The God who gives us a future in the miracle of the resurrection is the same God who calls us to sacrifice our future. As we sacrifice our future, our very selves, we are given a "future" by God. And yet, the only thing going for us is our conviction (faith) in our God's ability to recreate that miracle in us (1 Cor. 15). In an age of self-fulfillment, the call of Jesus remains resolutely firm and radical: He who would save his life must lose it and he who would lose it for my sake will find it.

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An Exegetical Study
of Genesis 38

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Introduction

Although Benno Jacob has called the Judah-Tamar story "the crown of the book of Genesis and Tamar one of the most admirable women,"¹ Genesis 38 has generated more frustration than enthusiasm among its interpreters. This frustration has ensued from the story's position amidst the Joseph narrative. Many commentators describe the positioning of Genesis 38 by terms such as "unconnected, independent, interruption."² Von Rad asserts, "Every attentive reader can see that the story of Judah and Tamar has no connection at all with the strictly organized Joseph story at whose beginning it is now inserted."³ Similarly Brueggemann alleges, "This peculiar chapter stands alone, without connection to its context. It is isolated in every way and is most enigmatic."⁴ Bowie says that Genesis 38 "is like an alien element, suddenly and arbitrarily thrust into a record which it serves only to disturb. Certainly few people would choose this chapter as a basis for teaching or preaching."⁵

⁵ Walter Russell Bowie, "The Book of Genesis: Exposition," in The Interpreter's...
This is not merely the sentiment of recent writers. As far back as the second century B.C., the writer of the pseudepigraphal Book of Jubilees repositioned the Judah-Tamar account later in the Joseph story after the events of Genesis 41:1-49. Moreover, Josephus, in the second book of his Antiquities of the Jews, gave considerable attention to the Joseph story and omitted Genesis 38 in the process. The concern of his second book was "the descent of the Israelites into Egypt and their eventual liberation therefrom." Apparently Josephus did not consider Genesis 38 germane to this theme. Furthermore, as Goldin has observed, even the medieval Jewish commentator Rashi wondered why Genesis 38 was "placed here to interrupt the account about Joseph." Indeed the location of the Judah-Tamar story has a long history of being considered problematic. Unfortunately the "views of the function and purpose of Genesis 38 have remained relatively static through the years." Recently there has been a renewed interest in Genesis 38 and its related is-


10 Susan Niditch, "The Wrong Woman Righted: An Analysis of Genesis 38," _Harvard Theological Review_ 72 (January-April 1979): 143. One exception to this trend is Umberto Cassuto's fine study, first published in 1929, which considered the problem of Genesis 38's location in the Joseph story. He too noted that scholars of his day paid much attention to the origin and construction of Genesis 38 but "have not dealt at all, or only superficially, with the problem of the relationship between this section and its context" (_Biblical and Oriental Studies_, vol. 1 [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 19731, pp. 29-40).
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sues. Yet this has come almost exclusively from scholars whose critical approach to the text colors the conclusions they offer. On the other hand conservative writers have given scant attention, at least in written form, to the Genesis 38 problem.

The purpose of this article is to examine the interconnection between Genesis 38 and its context. The present writer seeks to demonstrate that Moses, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, carefully interwove the Judah-Tamar story with the Joseph narrative for the purpose of further developing his theme in Genesis. This will be accomplished by examining the chronological, literary, and theological relationships between Genesis 38 and its context.

An Exegetical Overview of Genesis 38

Any such discussion of the relationship between Genesis 38 and its context must build on an understanding of the chapter itself. Thus the following overview of the Judah-Tamar story is offered.

LITERARY ANALYSIS

The Judah-Tamar story takes the form of a comedy, a type of story characterized by a "U-shaped" plot that moves from tragedy to a happy ending. Of the plot devices familiar to comic structure, this story contains at least the following: disguise, mistaken identity, surprise, sudden reversal of misfortune, rescue from disaster, and reversal of conventional expectations (specifically, the younger over the older). Furthermore its ending with the birth of two sons is simi-


12 This writer uses "purpose" here as defined by John A. Martin: "the reason the author wrote his material for his original readers and for those who would enter into the original readers' experience down through the ages. The purpose includes the desired effect the material would have on the original readers. The purpose is to be inferred from the text itself and should not be imposed on the text from the outside" (The Structure of 1 and 2 Samuel," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 [January-March 1984]: 42, n. 12).

13 Leland Ryken suggests four major types of stories: the heroic narrative, the epic, the comedy, and the tragedy. For further discussion and explanation, see his work *How to Read the Bible as Literature* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985) pp. 75-86.
lar to the types of endings usually found in a comic plot.\(^{14}\)

THE FUTURE OF JUDAH'S LINE IN JEOPARDY (38:1-11)

*General introduction (38:1).* The opening verse informs the reader that Judah went down (תָּרָם) from his brothers and turned aside (לָשֵׁב) to an Adullamite man named Hirah.\(^{15}\) Stigers calculates that Judah was about 20 years of age at this time.\(^{16}\)

*The establishment of Judah's family (38:2-5).* The plot heightens as Judah, who had already associated himself with a Canaanite man,\(^{17}\) took a Canaanite wife.\(^{18}\) The subsequent births of three sons are "recorded in breathless pace," indicating the subordinate role of these events as they establish the context for what is to come.\(^{19}\)

*The tragedy in Judah's family (38:6-11).* The account now jumps from the birth of the sons to the marriage of the first. At this point in the narrative, Tamar, the second main character, is introduced. After Judah took Tamar to be a wife for his son Er, tragedy struck. Because Er was evil in the sight of Yahweh, He took Er's life.\(^{20}\)

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 82.

\(^{15}\) Assuming that the events of Genesis 38 began transpiring soon after Joseph was sold into slavery, the story would have occurred around 1898 B.C. For a helpful chart on the chronology from Solomon back to Joseph, cf. Allen P. Ross, "Genesis," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, 2 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983, 1985), 1:89. This sets the story near the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age 11 A (ca. 1900-1750 B.C.), a period that witnessed a movement toward a seminomadic and even a sedentary lifestyle. Urban centers began to develop in Palestine, and the culture was in a state of flux, being influenced from the north and the east (G. Herbert Livingston, The Pentateuch in Its Cultural Environment [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974], p. 16; Keith N. Schoville, Biblical Archaeology in Focus [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978], p. 40).


\(^{18}\) Mixed marriage with the Canaanites was understood by the patriarchs to be a threat to the Abrahamic promise. In both Genesis 24:3-4 and 28:1, 6, the warnings by Abraham and Isaac not to take a Canaanite wife were expressed by הָיָה with the imperfect (of הָיָה), which denotes permanent prohibition. See Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 114.

\(^{19}\) Robert Alter notes, "Here, as at other points in the episode, nothing is allowed to detract our focused attention from the primary, problematic subject of the proper channel for the seed" (*The Art of Biblical Narrative* [New York: Basic Books, 19811, p. 6).

\(^{20}\) H. Freedman suggests that Er's wickedness may be "deduced" from the wickedness and death of Onan mentioned in 38:10. He bases his argument on the terms "also," taking it to mean "for the same reason" ("The Book of Genesis," in *The Soncino Chumash:
After Er's death Judah commanded Onan to go to Tamar and "do your duty as a brother-in-law" (לְבָרָא) to her with the intent of raising up offspring for Er (v. 8). Behind this verse lies the plight of a childless widow and the resulting custom of levirate marriage. But as 38:9-10 reveals, Onan refused to perform this duty, knowing that the offspring would be considered his dead brother's and not his. Driver has pointed out that the construction בָּרָא תָּמָר should be understood as a frequentative use of the perfect and translated "whenever he went in" instead of "when he went in." Thus the action by Onan was done repeatedly and was not just a one-time event. Because this was evil in the eyes of Yahweh, He took Onan's life.

Genesis 38:11 draws to a close this sad chapter in Judah's family. Judah instructed Tamar to go back to her father's house until Shelah, the third son, grew up. Judah feared that Shelah would die as had his two older brothers. Stigers suggests that Judah was

21 According to Ralph Alexander, the primary meaning of the verbal root = is "to assume the responsibility to marry one's widowed sister-in-law in order to raise up a male heir to the deceased brother." He notes that "it developed its specific nuance from the brother-in-law's function in the law of levirate marriage" ("Cn," in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, 2 vols. [Chicago: Moody Press, 1980], 1:359). For support of the existence of the levirate custom outside Israel, see Donald A. Leggett, The Levirate and Goel Institutions in the Old Testament with Special Attention to the Book of Ruth (Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Co., 1974), pp. 12-27.

22 Niditch describes the awkward position of a childless widow during this time: "She is no longer a virgin and does not belong in her father's home. Yet she can no longer bear children in the patriarchal line; her link with that line, the husband, has died. The woman who has never had children before her husband's death finds herself in a particularly anomalous and uncomfortable situation: Where is she to go?" ("The Wrong Woman Righted," p. 146).


24 Derek Kidner, Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), p. 188.

25 Perhaps, as suggested by W. Gunther Plaut, Judah thought that by removing her from the house, the duty of Shelah to marry her might become less pressing with the passing of time. This seems to be the explanation given in the latter part of Genesis 38:11 for this unusual action (Genesis [New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1974], p. 372). Furthermore C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch comment: "The sudden death of his two sons so soon after their marriage with Thamar [sic] made Judah hesitate to give her the third as a husband also, thinking, very likely, according to a su-
quite "spiritually unperceptive" at this point, refusing "to connect
the evil conduct of his sons with their early demise."\textsuperscript{26}

The groundwork has been laid for the real drama to unfold in
Genesis 38:12-30. Moving at a rapid pace, the author has for the most
part presented the facts without reference to causes or motives.\textsuperscript{27}

**THE CONTINUATION OF JUDAH'S LINE THROUGH TAMAR (38:12-30)**

_Tamar's deception of Judah (38:12-23)._ This section records the
bold actions of Tamar, who deceived her father-in-law Judah into
unknowingly performing the levirate duty. Disguise, an element com-
mon to comic structure, dominates this part of the narrative. Also the
plot now unfolds at a slower pace here in the heart of the story.\textsuperscript{28}

Verses 12-15 describe Tamar's cunning move when circumstances
in Judah's life afforded her an opportunity to act. Judah, whose wife
had died, had finished his time of mourning and was preparing to
join his sheepshearers. The hard and dirty work of shearing sheep
was accompanied by a festival that was noted for hilarity and much
wine-drinking.\textsuperscript{29} No doubt Tamar calculated that the flavor of this
festival and the sexual unfulfillment that resulted from being a wid-
ower would make Judah quite susceptible to sexual temptation.\textsuperscript{30}

So Tamar removed her widow's garments, veiled her face, en-
wrapped herself in disguise, and proceeded to wait at the entrance of
Enaim.\textsuperscript{31} The latter part of 38:14 indicates Tamar's motive for this
action: She had not been given in marriage to Shelah even though
he had grown up. She was being deprived of conception through the
law of levirate duty, so she decided to take matters into her own
hands.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{26} Stigers, A Commentary on Genesis, p. 279.

\textsuperscript{27} Von Rad, Geneiss, p. 352.

\textsuperscript{28} Von Rad views Genesis 38:12-30 as the "real story" which is set against the
"necessary facts" provided by 38:1-11 (Genesis, p. 352).

\textsuperscript{29} See 1 Samuel 25:4, 8, 18, 36; 2 Samuel 13:23, 28; cf. Madeleine S. and J. Lane Miller,
_Harper's Encyclopedia of Bible Life_, ed. Boyce M. Bennett, Jr. and David Ff. Scott, 3d

\textsuperscript{30} Leupold, Genesis, 2:982-83. Kidner notes that sexual temptation would be sharp-
ened- during this festive time by the "Canaanite cult, which encouraged ritual fornic-
tion as fertility magic (Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 188).

\textsuperscript{31} The term (38:14) has been problematic and subject to many suggestions.
From the context of 38:21, it is apparent that: alone was sufficient to identify a
place of meeting known to the characters of the story.

\textsuperscript{32} Middle Assyrian Law number 33 and Hittite Lawn number 193 suggest inclusion of
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Judah was fooled by Tamar's disguise (38:15), considering her to be a prostitute.33 So he had sexual relations with her (v. 16). Then in lieu of payment Judah left a pledge which would become an important piece of identification later in the story. This pledge consisted of Judah's cylinder seal and his staff. Vawter explains, "What Judah does is surrender his ID card, which he expects to be quickly redeemed, but which Tamar retains for her own purposes."34 As a result Judah attempted to honor his pledge to a prostitute who seemingly had vanished (vv. 20-23).

Judah's discovery about Tamar (38:24-26). In these verses the story's descent into tragedy is brought to a climax as Judah, still reckoning the pregnant Tamar to be part of his family, sentences her to burning.35 But precisely at this point enters the surprise that

the father in the line of levirate responsibility. While the extant copies of these laws are dated a few hundred years later than the time of the Judah-Tamar story, they at least suggest that Tamar's action of seeking conception by Judah may have been in accord with a similar custom existing during her time. A translation of these laws appears in James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, 3d ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 182, 196.

33 Though Judah recognizes her as a נְנֵֽו (38:15), Hirah refers to her as הָלוֹכְּת (38:21). The verb נְנֵֽו is used regularly in the Old Testament for the activity of a prostitute and refers to illicit heterosexual intercourse. Primarily it denotes a sexual relationship outside a formal union or outside the marriage bond (Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907], p. 275; S. Erlandsson, "נְנֵֽו," in Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 19801, 4:99-100). On the other hand the term הָלוֹכְּת denotes a "temple prostitute" who functioned in association with the fertility cult in Canaanite religion (Thomas E. McComiskey, "וָלֹכְּת," in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, 2:788). While Judah was certainly out of fellowship with Yahweh, it is not necessary to suppose that he was actively practicing Canaanite religion in this situation. He was simply seeking sexual gratification. Though he certainly assumed the disguised Tamar to be a temple prostitute, the less technical term נְנֵֽו in 38:15 emphasizes that he recognized her as a prostitute with whom he could fulfill his sexual desires. See also Adele Berlin, Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), pp. 60-61.

34 Bruce Vawter, On Genesis: A New Reading (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1977), p. 398. Cylinder seals were usually between one and two inches in length and were made of hematite or else basalt, marble, ivory, or even wood. The outer face of the seal was engraved with a design which would make an impression when it was rolled on damp clay, thus creating marks of identification. They were often attached to a cord which was strung around the owner's neck. See D. J. Wiseman and A. R. Millard, "Seal, Sealing in the Old Testament," in The Illustrated Bible Dictionary, ed. J. D. Douglas (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1980), 3:1407; "Seal, Seals in the Ancient Period," in Encyclopedia Judaica (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 14:1972-74.

35 Later, in the Mosaic Law, burning was prescribed only in the case of a man who married both a woman and her mother (Lev. 20:14) or a priest's daughter involved in harlotry (Lev. 21:9). Stoning was the usual punishment for adultery (Deut. 22:20-24). Stigers points out that the Code of Hammurabi, as well as the Hittite and Middle Assyrian laws, never prescribes burning for adultery. He suggests, though, that "we
changes the course of the story. Tamar produced her evidence, revealing that the one who impregnated her was none other than Judah! The participle הָאָדָם expresses simultaneous action with the Qal perfect form הָלַעַשׁ. Tamar sent her telling items to Judah even as she was being brought out to receive her death sentence.

Judah in turn was forced to admit that "she is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah" (v. 26) Though the root הָדָר ("righteous") often has moral connotations when applied to God's standards, its basic meaning is conformity to a standard, whether ethical or moral. The standard in this case would be the accepted social custom and duty of levirate marriage. The verdict from Judah in verse 26 is the normative (authoritative) viewpoint of the story. That is, Judah's statement is the "key utterance," which "we intuitively recognize as summing up what the story as a whole is asserting."

Tamar's delivery of twin sons (38:27-30). The story concludes with the birth of twin sons by Tamar. Because of the bursting out of the second boy over the first one, he was named "Perez" (יָרֵא), which means "an outburst, bursting forth, a breach." The name given to the boy with the scarlet thread tied on his hand was "Zerah" (זֵרָה), a name meaning "dawning, shining, brightness" and perhaps allude—should see here 'a reflection of his [Judah's] patriarchal predecessors or of their own ancestral culture. Here is a clear case of adultery, and the penalty is but one. There seems to be no reason to seek others. Judah's judgment was the correct one. More final conclusions probably will have to wait for further archaeological discoveries" (A Commentary on Genesis, p. 281).

For classification and examples of simultaneous action expressed by the participle and the perfect tense, see sections 220 and 237 in Williams, Hebrew Syntax, pp. 40, 43.

This verse itself, through the two statements of Tamar, creates suspense for the reader. In her first statement, her items of proof are simply identified by the term Then her second statement brings her shocking revelation to a climax as the items referred to by הָלַעַשׁ-ן are revealed to be Judah's cylinder seal and staff which Tamar had in her keeping.

E. Jacob understands this standard to be that of prostitution, the rules and customs of which Judah has not respected (Theology of the Old Testament, trans. Arthur W. Heathcoat and Philip J. Allcock [New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 19581, p. 95). However, one wonders in what way Judah did not respect the rules and customs of prostitution. Jacob's view does not adequately account for Judah's confession "inasmuch as I did not give her to Shelah my son." This confession hardly refers to any customs associated with prostitution, but has reference to the custom of levirate marriage.

This terminology is borrowed from Ryken, How to Read the Bible as Literature, p. 62. Brueggemann also recognizes the importance of this verdict, proposing that it "constitutes the main turn in the narrative" (Genesis, p. 309).

For von Rad, the conclusion to this story is "somewhat unsatisfactory." He asks, "Is v. 30 its conclusion at all? Strangely it concludes without telling whose wife Tamar finally became. According to v. 26b, in any case, she was not Judah's. Was she then Shelah's? Should that not have been said?"  

However, as Ross points out, this conclusion "provides the significance of the whole account. God gave Tamar twins, and the line of Judah continued in her." This significance continued to blossom as God's revelation progressed.

The Chronological Relationship

THE CHRONOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Two alleged chronological problems have led some scholars to suggest that Genesis 38 was inserted into its present location by a later redactor or editor. Despite the chronological problems this insertion would pose, the editor who wanted to include the Judah-Tamar story could find no better place to do so without causing even more difficulty.

As to the first alleged problem, it is often argued that the time between the sale of Joseph (Gen. 37:25-36) and the migration of Jacob's clan into Egypt (46:1-7), which included Judah and his twin sons, would have been insufficient for the events of Genesis 38 to have transpired. In the space of 22 years, Judah would have had to marry, father three sons, see them grow old enough to be married, and then father the twin sons born to Tamar.

The second problem stems from Genesis 46:12, which mentions two grandsons of Judah, sons of Perez, among the sons of Israel who

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42 Ibid., p. 280.
43 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 356.
44 Ross, "Genesis," p. 89.
45 Ruth 4:18-22; 1 Chronicles 2:3-15; and Matthew 1:3-6.
46 That a space of 22 years occurred between Joseph's sale and the family of Jacob's migration into Egypt can be established from references to the age of Joseph at various points in his life. Genesis 37:2 indicates that Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold by his brothers to the Midianites and subsequently taken to Egypt. In 41:46, Joseph's appointment by Pharaoh came when Joseph was 30 years of age. Thus 13 Years had elapsed. Genesis 41:46-49 then describes the seven years of abundance at the end of which 20 years would have passed since Joseph was sold by his brothers. Genesis 45:6-7 indicates that Joseph's revelation of himself to his brothers and the subsequent move of Jacob's family into Egypt came two years into the famine. This brings the total to 22 years which had elapsed between Joseph's sale and Jacob's move to Egypt.
migrated to Egypt. If Perez and Zerah were born near the end of the 22-year period, as Genesis 38 implies, it would have been impossible for Perez to produce the offspring mentioned in 46:12 before or during the migration to Egypt.

In reference to these alleged problems of the events in Genesis 38 and 46:12 taking place in a 22-year period, Bush's comments represent the opinion of many critical scholars: "This period is evidently too short for the occurrence of all these events, and we are therefore necessitated to refer the commencement of them at least as far back as to about the time of Jacob's coming to Shechem, Gen. 33:18; but the incidents are related here because there was no more convenient place for them."47

THE CHRONOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS

On further examination, however, these two supposed chronological difficulties may be satisfactorily resolved.

In response to the first problem, it would not have been impossible for the events of Genesis 38 to have taken place during the 22-year span between the end of Genesis 37 and the commencement of Genesis 39. Judah could have married within six months or so after Joseph's sale into Egypt and could have had three sons within three years.48 Or Judah could have married before Joseph was sold into Egypt. Since young people married at early ages in comparison with today,49 Er, the first son, could have married Tamar when he was about 15 or 16. He may have died a short time later, at which point Onan was commanded to perform the levirate duty for Tamar. Onan's sin and death may have occurred between 16 and 18 years after Joseph's exile. This leaves a couple of years for Shelah to reach marriageable age and to be withheld from Tamar. Time is still left

47 George Bush, Notes on Genesis, 2 vols. (New York: Ivison, Phinney & Co., 1860; reprint, Minneapolis: James Family Christian publishers, 1979), 2:238. Bruce Vawter concurs: "The [Judah-Tamar] story concerns an adult Judah who is separated from the rest of his brothers and leads a life apart in the south of Palestine. This combination of circumstances hardly allows for a positioning of the story anywhere earlier in the saga, when Judah was too young, or is presumed still part of the common family, or in any case is in the wrong part of the country. Neither could it be put immediately before the Joseph story, for in the Yahwist's version of that story Judah must be on hand with the rest of his brothers to get the thing launched, as we have just seen. Once the story of Joseph in Egypt is well begun with chapter 39 there is no longer any opportunity to interrupt it without inflicting literary violence to revolt a less sensitive artist than the Yahwist" (On Genesis, p. 390).


for Tamar's deception, her pregnancy, her delivery of two sons, and Judah's two trips into Egypt with his brothers to buy corn. No doubt the coming of the famine forced Judah to rejoin his father's clan. So it is possible for the events of Genesis 38 to have taken place in such a time frame. In fact, Cassuto has further observed that the opening words of Genesis 38, איהו ת freshmen יני, reflect an awareness on the part of the author of the short time in which the events of the chapter must occur. He comments:

From the opening words of the section we immediately note that the author was not unaware that the period of time, with which he was dealing, was short and that the happenings that occurred therein were many, and that he must consequently bring them into the closest possible harmony. Hence he did not begin with the formula commonly found in ... Genesis, "And it came to pass after these things," nor does he write simply "And Judah went down from his brethren," but he uses the expression "And it came to pass at that time," as though he wished to emphasize that immediately after the selling of Joseph, at that very time, Judah went down from his brothers and married the daughter of Shua.

The second chronological difficulty concerns the mention of Judah's grandsons in Genesis 46:12. Obviously Judah's sons Perez and Zerah were quite young, perhaps just a few months old, when they traveled to Egypt. Therefore it would have been impossible for Perez to have fathered Hezron and Hamul, his two sons mentioned in Genesis 46:12, before the journey into Egypt.

A close look, however, at Genesis 46:12 reveals a variation in the mention of Hezron and Hamul. The end of the verse reads: "And the sons of Perez were (ויהו) Hezron and Hamul." Yet throughout Genesis 46, the listing of descendants was done without the use of a verbal form. For example, verse 12a reads, "And the sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah."

50 If Cassuto is right in suggesting that Er did not marry Tamar until he was 18, the chronology becomes even tighter. Er's marriage and subsequent death would have been in the sixth year of plenty when Joseph was 36. Onan, at 17 years of age, could have then married Tamar and died in the same year. Meanwhile Shelah would have only been 16. Two years could then pass by until Shelah was 18, convincing Tamar that Judah would not give her to Shelah. This would have been Joseph's 38th year and the first year of the period of famine. Then in the second year of the famine Tamar would have given birth to the twins. Later that year, when the twins were a few months old, the family of Jacob would have migrated to Egypt (U. Cassuto, Biblical and Oriental Studies, pp. 39-40).

51 Ibid., p. 79.

52 Even if the events in Genesis 38 began to take place shortly after Jacob's return from Shechem (which could not have been more than six years before Joseph's sale), Perez could not have been any older than 11 when Jacob's family went to Egypt (Keil and Delitzsch, The Pentateuch, p. 371).
Cassuto comments on the "special phraseology" employed in the mention of Hezron and Hamul: "This external variation creates the impression that the Bible wished to give us here some special information that was different from what it desired to impart relative to the other descendants of Israel."\(^5\) Cassuto then explains the intention behind this special phraseology:

It intended to inform us thereby that the sons of Perez were not among those who went down to Egypt, but are mentioned here for some other reason. This is corroborated by the fact that Joseph's sons were also not of those who immigrated into Egypt, and they, too, are mentioned by a different formula.\(^4\)

While the author considered it necessary to mention Hezron and Hamul in the list of Jacob's family, it was done in such a way as to distinguish them from the descendants who actually migrated to Egypt with Jacob.

The Literary Relationship

THE LITERARY DIFFICULTIES

Scholars who consider Genesis 38 as having no literary connection with the Joseph story whatsoever generally assume it to be a later intrusion. Speiser, for example, asserts, "The narrative is a completely independent unit. It has no connection with the drama of Joseph, which it interrupts at the conclusion of Act I."\(^5\) With similar sentiment, Vawter writes:

\(^5\) Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, p. 34.
\(^6\) Ibid., p. 35. Cassuto has also treated at length the reason for the mention of these sons. He finds the rationale for the inclusion of their names in the purpose of levirate marriage. Usually the brother of the deceased provides a son for the deceased. But when the father of the deceased provides a son, the son ranks with the deceased himself and not with his sons. According to Cassuto, Judah had five sons, each of whom had the right to establish a family of his own in Israel. Perez and Zerah, as his sons, clearly possessed this right. In other words they did not merely replace Er and Onan, but stood alongside them. If they had replaced Er and Onan, the families of the sons of Judah would have numbered only three. So two special families were needed to succeed the name of the dead. Hezron and Hamul, who would have ranked equally with the sons of Er and Onan, took their uncles' place. Cassuto finds support for this hypothesis in Numbers 26:19-21 which mentions the Perezites, the Hezronites, and the Hamulites. He explains, "This means that each of the first two sons of Perez founded a separate family of its own, and that only the children that lie begot after them established a third family, which was called by his [Perez's] name" (ibid., p. 38; the entire argument is given on pp. 36-38).

\(^5\) E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1981), p. 299. However, in attributing the insertion of this chapter to the Yahwist, Speiser does admit that "the place of the present account was chosen with keen literary sensitivity" (ibid.).
Scarcely has the distinctive Joseph story been begun when it is interrupted by a chapter that apparently has nothing to do with it. There can hardly be any doubt that this chapter did, as a matter of fact, originally have no connection with the Story of Joseph and that it is, therefore, in some sense an intrusion here.  

**THE LITERARY INTERCONNECTEDNESS**  
Though Genesis 38 obviously interrupts the sequence in the Joseph story, it possesses a literary interconnectedness with its context. While Genesis 37-50 is often identified as the "Joseph story," 37:2 identifies this section as "the generations (_DUMP relent) of Jacob." So while the "focal element" of these chapters is the Joseph story, the basic unit of narration in Genesis 37-50 is "unified around Jacob and his sons." Genesis 38 "shows a very definite angle of Jacob's history." Therefore it is wrong to deny categorically any connection or relationship between Genesis 38 and the Joseph story as a whole.  

Furthermore in response to the charge that Genesis 38 breaks a bond between Genesis 37:36 and 39:1, the language of 37:36 and 39:1 allows for a gap into which Genesis 38 nicely fits. Delitzsch suggests that this was done as a literary convention by the author:  

> It is historiographic art to break off in the history of Joseph at xxxvii. 36. We thus get to experience with him the comfortless darkness of the two decades, during which hopeless and sorrowful longing was gnawing at the heart of the aged father, and the secret curse of deadly sin deceitfully concealed was weighing on the souls of his children.

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56 Vawter, On Genesis, p. 389. Furthermore, G. W. Coats, in discussing the "redactional unity" in Genesis 37-50, contends that the "bond" between Genesis 37 and 39 is "cemented" by 37:36. This verse, he suggests, must be viewed as "an anticipation of the introductory sentence in Genesis 39, similar to the recapitulation as a redactional method for cementing a distinct narrative into a larger context" ("Redactional Unity in Genesis 37-50," Journal of Biblical Literature 93 [March 19741: 16).

57 Conservative scholars do not deny that there is a sense in which the Judah-Tamar story "interrupts" the Joseph narrative. Even Derek Kidner labels Genesis 38 "a rude interruption" (Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary, p. 187).

58 For a discussion of the structure of Genesis based on the i. i formula, see Ross, "Genesis," pp. 22-26.

59 Coats, "Redactional Unity," p. 15.

60 Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, 2:970.

61 Genesis 39:1 reiterates the information given in 37:36, explaining that Joseph had been taken into Egypt and sold to Potiphar. Though restatement is common in Hebrew narrative, such a specific rehearsal by 39:1 of the details given in 37:36 would not be expected if the former followed right on the heels of the latter.

Even Wright acknowledges, "Of course it must be conceded that there is a sense of the dramatic in the positioning: it provides an interlude for the Joseph story to incubate and develop after the manner and function of a Shakesperian sub-plot."  

Moreover, a logical time gap between Genesis 37:36 and 39:1 is quite appropriate in light of the fact that "the scene is about to be shifted from Canaan to Egypt." The Judah-Tamar story quite masterfully prepares the reader for this shift.

Another strong argument for the interconnectedness of Genesis 38 with its context is what Cassuto calls "a kind of internal nexus between the story of Tamar and Judah and the selling of Joseph." This relationship between chapters 38 and 37 is "reflected in the correspondence of certain details in the two sections and is clearly manifested in the parallel expressions that denote these details." In particular there is a strong literary parallel between 37:32-33 and 38:25-26. This can be seen in the following layout which lifts out the key corresponding terms and shows the structure of the verses:

"And they sent ... and they said.... Please examine.... Then he examined it and said" (37:32-33).

"And she sent ... saying.... Please examine.... Then Judah examined and said" (38:25-26).

As Cassuto remarks, "It is difficult to suppose that such a parallel is merely fortuitous; it was undoubtedly intended by the author of the section." Likewise, Alter concludes:

This precise recurrence of the verb [זקן] in identical forms at the ends of Genesis 37 and 38 respectively is manifestly the result not of some automatic mechanism of interpolating traditional materials but of careful splicing of sources by a brilliant literary artist. The first use of

63 See Wright, "The Positioning of Genesis 38," p. 523, n. 3. With similar sentiment Leupold says, "We are struck ... by the rhetorical skill of the author who snakes this chapter serve the purpose of letting us feel the lapse of time after the sale of Joseph" (Exposition of Genesis, 2:976).


65 According to Aalders, "it was these events [i.e., Genesis 38] that especially bring to light the critical danger that threatened the 'chosen seed' if they remained in Canaan at this time. Mixed marriages with the Canaanites could lead only to the people of Israel losing their identity among the Canaanites and eventually being absorbed by them. This chapter clearly indicates that Jacob's descendants had to leave Canaan it they were to develop as a separate and distinctive people" (Genesis, 2:191).


67 Ibid.

68 Ibid., p. 31.
the formula was for an act of deception; the second use is for an act of unmasking. Judah with Tamar after Judah with his brothers is an exemplary narrative instance of the deceiver deceived.69

Alter points out one more literary pattern linking chapters 38 and 37 of Genesis. "In the most artful of contrivances, the narrator shows him [Judah] exposed through the symbols of his legal self given in a pledge for a kid (gedi 'izim), as before Jacob had been tricked by the garment emblematic of his love for Joseph which had been dipped in the blood of a goat (se'ir 'izim)."70

Also Genesis 38 has at least two notable parallels with chapter 39. The first, as explained by Alter, is a contrast: "Finally, when we return from Judah to the Joseph story (Genesis 39), we move in pointed contrast from a tale of exposure through sexual incontinence to a tale of seeming defeat and ultimate triumph through sexual continence-Joseph and Potiphar's wife."71

The second connection between chapters 38 and 39 of Genesis is the verbal root יָיטָק in both 38:1 and 39:1. Alter observes:

The story begins with Judah parting from his brothers, an act conveyed with a rather odd locution, vayered m'et, literally "he went down from," and which undoubtedly has the purpose of connecting this separation of one brother from the rest with Joseph's, transmitted with the same verb-root (see, for example, the very beginning of the next chapter: "Joseph was brought down [hurad] to Egypt").72

In summary, what many view as an intrusion was actually an account carefully, logically, and purposefully interwoven into the Joseph story.

The Theological Relationship

In considering the theological relationship between Genesis 38 and its context, the question may be asked, What was the writer's purpose in including this account, especially in its location in the Joseph story?

VARIOUS PROPOSALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF GENESIS 38

Regarding the purpose of Genesis 38, some scholars have offered proposals colored by their adherence to the "clan theory." This approach understands the patriarchal narratives in Genesis to relate to

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., p. 6.
tribal history. The patriarchs are not necessarily historical individuals but are seen as representing tribes. Applied to Genesis 38, this theory considers the story's purpose to be the recording of the tribal history of Judah in which two clans disappear and two others appear. According to McKane, Er and Onan "represent older clans which no longer retain their independence," while Shelah, Perez, and Zerah comprise "the chief Judaean clans at the time of the origin of the narrative."

However, as Kidner has pointed out, "the narrative [Genesis 38] has a coherence and a precision of detail which argue strongly for the actuality of its persons and events." Aalders also argues that Genesis 38 is "actually history dealing with real persons," since Judah is portrayed in an unfavorable light. "If this was a matter of Jewish myth or nationalistic fantasy, the later Israelites certainly would have laundered out such tales."

Some have proposed a secondary purpose. Dillmann, for example, writes, "A secondary purpose of the narrative is found in the desire it exhibits of impressing the duty of marriage with a deceased brother's wife." However, Emerton, while observing that this suggestion cannot be disproved, responds that "there is not much in the story to suggest the didactic intention of inculcating such a general principle."

Other scholars have proposed that the purpose of Genesis 38 is to influence in some way the "moral fabric of society." According to Coats, "to present a helpless widow whose just claim eventually receives a hearing from a judge who has the power of life and death over her casts a model for any audience."

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77 Ibid.


It should be noted that none of the above proposals as to the purpose of Genesis 38 builds on or depends on the chapter's position in the Joseph story. That is, in these proposals the placement of Genesis 38 in the Joseph story has no direct bearing on the purpose of the chapter.

THE PURPOSE OF GENESIS 38 IN LIGHT OF THE THEOLOGY OF GENESIS

However, in the view of this writer, Genesis 38 possesses a theological purpose that harmonizes with and contributes to the developing theology in Genesis and in the Joseph story.82

An overview of the theology of Genesis. The central theme of Genesis is the sovereignty of Yahweh in His establishment of a nation through which to bless all the peoples of the world.83

This is borne out in the literary structure of Genesis. As Ross has pointed out, Genesis is structured by an initial section and then 11 sections headed by the term תּוֹלָדוֹת ("generations").84 This term, he argues, introduces the "historical result" of an ancestor rather than merely introducing a genealogy. Each תּוֹלָדוֹת explains what became of a line, all the while narrowing down and following the line through which God would bring blessing. In addition, each תּוֹלָדוֹת shows a marked deterioration. Up to Genesis 12, the deterioration ends in judgment by God. After chapter 12, there is a continual deterioration among those striving for a place of blessing.85

Genesis 12 is a pivotal chapter, for it reveals Yahweh's choice of one man to found a nation through which He will bless all the peoples of the earth. Genesis 1-11 forms the prologue, giving the

82 Here Genesis 38 is being approached from the discipline of "biblical theology," which focuses on what the texts of Scripture reveal about the person and work of God especially in relationship to mankind. In contrast to systematic theology, which begins with topics (externally imposed categories of study), biblical theology begins with the text, observing what topics are considered and how they are developed by the biblical text. John A. Martin describes biblical theology as "a study of the text of Scripture for the purpose of discovering and describing what the text meant as well as what it means. It attempts to draw out universal theological principles. The biblical theologian draws his categories from the biblical text itself and not from any outside philosophical system or other sources" ("The Theology of Samuel," Bibliotheca Sacra 141 [October-December 1984]: 313, n. 1). For a helpful overview of the development and methodology of biblical theology, with particular attention to its attending issues, see Gerhard Hasel, Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate, 3d rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 15-183.

84 Ibid., p. 22.
85 Ibid., pp. 22-26.
background out of which the story in Genesis 12-50 arises.86

The final section in Genesis, the דְּתָה of Jacob in 37:2-50:26, continues the emphasis on the sovereignty of Yahweh. According to Brueggemann, the theme of this section is "God is working out his purpose through and in spite of Egypt, through and in spite of Joseph and his brothers."87 Though the theology in this section is somewhat "subdued and mostly implicit," Brueggemann emphasizes that "nonetheless, the narrative [Genesis 37-50] has an identifiable and singular intention. It urges that in the contingencies of history, the purposes of God are at work in hidden and unnoticed ways. But the ways of God are nonetheless reliable and will come to fruition."88

The theology of Genesis 38. Yet despite Brueggemann's magnificent treatment of the purpose of Genesis 37-50, he misses the point of Genesis 38 entirely, failing to see its contribution to that purpose. He writes, "It is not evident that it [Gen. 38] provides any significant theological resource. It is difficult to know in what context it might be of value for theological exposition."89

However, in the viewpoint of the present writer, Genesis 38 fits beautifully within the theme and purpose Brueggemann described for Genesis 37-50. It further develops and contributes to the theology being unfolded in Genesis.

First, this chapter teaches that Yahweh would accomplish His purpose, even if He had to use a Canaanite woman to do it. Surprisingly, Plaut is one of the few commentators to pick up on this emphasis. Even though he approaches the text from a critical perspective, he has noted the theological import of Genesis 38. Stressing that "God in His wisdom turned fate to His own design," Plaut concludes:

The Judah-Tamar interlude is, therefore, not merely an old tribal tale but an important link in the main theme: to show the steady, though not always readily visible, guiding hand of God who never forgets His people and their destiny.

In this story, Tamar is His unlikely tool. She is a Canaanite, a daughter of the very people against whom Abraham had warned and whom the children of Israel would later displace. Tamar is treated with respect; her desperate deed draws no condemnation from the Torah. What she did fulfilled the requirements of Hebrew law and, in addition, appeared to serve the higher purposes of God.90

87 Brueggemann, Genesis, p. 293.
88 Ibid., p. 289.
89 Ibid., pp. 307-8.
90 Plaut, Genesis, p. 376.
The closing verses of Genesis 38 confirm that Yahweh's purpose was being carried out. Here the recurring motif of the elder serving the younger is worked out in the birth of Tamar's twin sons. God's designs cannot be thwarted.  

The full significance of God's continuation of the line of Judah through Tamar is revealed later in Scripture. The genealogy in Ruth 4:18-22 indicates that the Davidic line was introduced by Tamar's son Perez. And into the Davidic line, Jesus the Messiah was eventually born.

Second, Genesis 38 develops the theology of Genesis by emphasizing the need for Yahweh to remove His people to Egypt. The events in this chapter "especially bring to light the critical danger that threatened the 'chosen seed' if they remained in Canaan at this time." Eventually they would be absorbed into the culture of the Canaanites and their identity would be lost. Thus Genesis 38 provides an important link between Genesis 15:13-16, the promise to Abraham of his descendants' sojourn in a foreign land, and Genesis 46, which records the removal to Egypt. The Judah-Tamar story brings to light the reason behind the promise given in Genesis 15:13-16. Because of the growing deterioration among the progenitors of the nation Israel, Yahweh would have to remove His people from the land of blessing for a time.

Along this line the contrast between Judah and Joseph cannot go unnoticed. "Parallel to Joseph's spiritual ingenuosness, patience, hopeful trust in the future, appears Judah's strong and daring self-dependence, fulness of life, sensuality combined with strong absti-nence." Through the triumph over temptation, Joseph was eventually placed in a strategic position that enabled him to be God's instrument in bringing his father's clan down to Egypt. Judah's lifestyle, in contrast, revealed the need for the family to be removed in the first place.

To summarize, Genesis 38 describes Yahweh's accomplishment of His purpose (in the continuation of the Abrahamic line) despite the unfaithfulness of Judah--the fourth link in that line. The continuation of Abraham's line, and its narrowing by the introduction of the Davidic line through Perez, was accomplished by using a most unlikely person--a Canaanite woman.

91 Ross, "Genesis, pp. 89-90.
93 Aalders, Genesis, 2:191.
Therefore the normative meaning\(^95\) of this story may be stated as follows: Yahweh will carry out His purpose(s) despite His people's unfaithfulness and its tragic consequences on their lives. His purposes will not be frustrated, even if He has to use means other than His people to accomplish them. But at the same time, His people will experience a loss of joy and blessing in their relationship with Him.

**Conclusion**

Rather than relating to its context as "a dog among ninepins,"\(^96\) as Bentzen has suggested, Genesis 38 bears distinct chronological, literary, and theological relationships to its context. It bears all the marks of being purposely included at its present location in the Joseph story by the writer of Genesis. Its theological message, a further development of the theology of Genesis, has relevance for God's people today.

\(^95\) Biblical theology has a twofold task. Its "descriptive" task is "to discover and describe what the text meant," while its "normative" task is "to explicate what it means for today" (Hasel, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 169).


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SHORT STUDIES

JACOB'S BLESSING ON PHARAOH:
AN INTERPRETATION OF GEN 46:31-47:26

BRIAN ALEXANDER MCKENZIE

Claus Westermann has done a great service for biblical studies by calling attention to the long-neglected concept of blessing in OT theology. Salvation consists of blessing as well as deliverance. God not only rescues man from oppression, danger, and evil; he also bestows positive benefits of many kinds. Westermann correctly observes that blessing is an important theme in three of the four major divisions of Genesis. The primeval history (Genesis 1-11), which begins by introducing the concept of blessing at the climax of its first chapter (1:28), repeatedly notes that God continues to bless man. The Abrahamic cycle (chaps. 12-26) centers on the promise of blessing and its fulfilment in the birth of Isaac; the Jacob-Esau cycle (chaps. 27-36) treats the "procedure of blessing and its consequences." Although Westermann is aware that Genesis concludes with two lengthy blessing passages (chaps. 48 and 49), surprisingly he gives no indication that blessing plays an important role throughout the Joseph cycle (chaps. 37-50).

2 Gen 5:2 ; 9:1. Westermann (Blessing, 30) suggests that even the genealogies of Genesis 1-11 are related to the theme of blessing since, in light of Gen 1:28, "blessing . . . signifies fertility." The close relationship between blessing and fertility is discussed in more detail in Claus Westermann, Die Verheissungen an die Väter: Studien zur Vätergeschichte (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976) 119-21 and 141-45.
3 Westermann, Blessing, 55.
4 Westermann (Blessing, 29), who identifies shalom as the major motif of the Joseph narrative, makes only a passing reference to the concept of
A study of Gen 46:31-47:26 will demonstrate that the theme of blessing has an important function in the Joseph cycle. This study will also show how the theme of blessing explains a number of perplexing aspects of Gen 46:31-47:26. First, it will explain why the author of Genesis included a report of Jacob's audience with Pharaoh, a report which does not contribute to the Joseph story's function of bridging the gap between Genesis 12-36 (set primarily in Canaan) and Exodus (which begins with an Egyptian setting). Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, this study will explain why the account of Joseph's agrarian reforms is included and given great prominence.

Before examining our passage, it is important to be aware of one aspect of the theme of blessing as it is developed in the long patriarchal section of Genesis. In the blessing of Abraham (12:1-3), which begins the patriarchal section, prominent references are made to the blessing of others besides Abraham and his descendants. Gen 12:3b states that blessing will extend to all nations through Abraham. It is especially blessing in Gen 47:7-10 and no reference to 39:5. Even Westermann's recently completed third volume in his monumental commentary on Genesis (Genesis 37-50 [BKAT 113; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982]) does not grasp the extent and full significance of the blessing theme in the Joseph cycle in general and in the interpretation of 47:13-26 in particular.


6 "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (marginal reading for 12:3b in the RSV). The Niphal form of brk, "to bless," in 12:3b also allows a reflexive translation as is found in the RSV and NEB. The NEB interpretation ("All the families on earth will pray to be blessed as you are blessed") is improbable since in Semitic thought words of blessing release power or incline God to act. (See J. Scharbert, "brk," TDOT 2.298-99, 304, and 287. But also see Anthony Thiselton, "Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings," JTS 25 [1974] 283-99.) The RSV interpretation ("by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves") makes v 3b a restatement of v 3a. The major argument for interpreting the Niphal form of brk reflexively in v 3b is that the Hithpael form is used in the parallel passages of Gen 22:18 and 26:4. However, O. Allis, "The Blessing of Abraham," Princeton Theological Review 25 (1927) 263-98, cogently argues that the Hithpael form can have a passive as well as a reflexive meaning in both Hebrew and other Semitic languages.
important to note a second reference to the blessing of those standing outside the chosen line. Gen 12:3a states that those who bless Abraham will be blessed by God: "I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse" (RSV).

Genesis is not lacking illustrations of this principle. The restoration of fertility after Abimelech returned Sarah and gave Abraham gifts is apparently an example of the principle that blessing follows positive action towards Abraham or his descendants standing within the chosen line. Gen 20:14 and 17 are best interpreted in this way even though the term brk "to bless" is not present, since the concept of curse for curse and blessing for blessing is implicitly present in this chapter.7

A second and more explicit illustration appears in the Joseph cycle, the more immediate context of the passage to be exegeted. Gen 39:4-5 states that blessing came to Potiphar's household because Potiphar favoured Joseph and raised him to a place of prominence and authority. This text clearly indicates that the blessing of individuals in response to their treatment of Abraham or his descendents is present in the Joseph cycle as well as in the earlier Abrahamic cycle.

I. The Structure and Meaning of Gen 46:31-47:6

Gen 46:31-47:6 breaks down into two sections. The preparation of the brothers for an audience with Pharaoh (46:31-34) is naturally followed by the account of the audience and its results (47:1-6). Upon careful examination a more detailed structure is discernible. Gen 47:1-6 subdivides into three sections. The account of the brothers' audience (vv 2-4) is framed by verses in which the brothers and Jacob are referred to in the third person (vv 1 and 5-6).8 A related, but less

7 The practice of allowing events to speak for themselves in certain passages is not restricted to Genesis 37-50. See notes 30 and 2.

8 Although, the present analysis follows the MT for the order of 47:1-12, the conclusions reached would still be valid if the LXX order for this passage (vv 1-5a, 6b, an additional sentence, 5b, 6a, and 7-12) were original. (A readily accessible translation of the LXX version is given by JB; a more literal one is found in NAB.) It is not possible to follow E. A. Speiser, Genesis (AB 1; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964) 351, who adopts the LXX reading because a copyist, he argues, jumped accidentally from the first occurrence of "Pharaoh said to Joseph" (NAB) to a second appearance at the end of the additional passage in the LXX. This explanation based on homoioteleuton must be rejected because, if the scribe had skipped from v 5a to the end of the additional passage, then

What is the function of this passage? Its primary significance lies in its contribution to the bridging function of the Joseph story which links Genesis 12-36 (set primarily in Canaan) and Exodus 1-15 (set in north-eastern Egypt).9 The account of the audience of Jacob's sons with Pharaoh informs the reader how Israel came to settle in the sensitive border province of Goshen in the eastern section of the Nile delta.10 The occupation of Joseph's brothers was repulsive to the Egyptians.11

v 6b would also have been lost along with the additional LXX material. But v 6b is present in the MT. For other arguments favouring the LXX version see Lothar Ruppert, Die Jcsephserzahlung der Genesis: Eine Beitrag zur Theologie der Pentateuchquellen (SANT 11; Munchen: Kosel-Verlag, 1965) 143 and S. R. Driver, The Book of Genesis (5th ed.; Westminster Commentaries; London: Methuen, [1906]) 370. For the MT version see Harold Stigers, A Commentary on Genesis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 318, and Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 188.

9 See note 5.

10 It is generally agreed that Palestinian sojourners would not normally have been allowed to settle in Goshen (or the land of Rameses [47:11] as it became known in the Nineteenth Dynasty, at the end of the thirteenth century B.C.). See Robert Davidson, Genesis 12-50 (Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979) 283, and Gerhard von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 399. But see Speiser (Genesis, 446) who claims that Asiatics "frequently" settled in Goshen in the northeastern Nile delta.

11 Contra John Skinner (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis [ICC; 2nd ed.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1930] 496) who contrasts "shepherds" and "keepers of cattle." These terms are used synonymously in this passage. For Joseph's instructions (46:34) to make sense, this must be the case. It would be counterproductive for Joseph, who wants to convince the king that his brothers should settle in Goshen, to instruct them to represent themselves as keepers of cattle rather than as shepherds. Franz Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis (Clark's Foreign Theological Library New Series; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1894) 2.343 correctly reads all of v 34 as part of Joseph's speech. This is a more natural reading of the passage than the hypothesis that "every shepherd is an abomina-
A second purpose of this passage can also be identified. A minor theme in the patriarchal section of Genesis is that the Israelites have always been a separate people. In the Abrahamic and Jacob cycles attention is given to the fact that Israel's ancestors avoided marital relationships with the inhabitants of Canaan (24:3; 26:34-35; 27:46-28:1). In the Joseph cycle Gen 46:34 (and also 43:32) reminds the Israelite reader that because of their "detestable" occupation they could not and did not mix with the Egyptians even when they lived in Egypt. This theme also reappears in the plague narratives of Exodus 7-15. Thus this passage contributes to one of the minor themes of Genesis, a theme which would be of sociological and hence theological importance for every period of Israel's history after it settled in Palestine and especially when it found itself in exile in Babylon.

This passage is significant in a third way for the concerns of Genesis. It contributes to the theme that blessing comes as a result of positive action towards the chosen line. Pharaoh has just issued the benevolent command to settle Jacob and his sons in "the best of the land" (47:6 and 11). This raises the reader's expectation that blessing will come to Pharaoh as it did to Potiphar in Gen 39:5. As will now be seen, this expectation is heightened by the account of Jacob's audience with Pharaoh before the blessing upon Pharaoh is described.

II. Gen 47:7-10: Jacob's Audience with Pharaoh

The account of Jacob's audience with Pharaoh contrasts in many ways with the description of his son's audience in Gen 47:1-6. First, 47:7-10 possesses a formal conclusion in v 10 in contrast to the abrupt ending of vv 2-4. Secondly, although his sons were relatively passive, speaking only after they had been addressed, Jacob appears quite active, taking the initiative at the beginning of the audience (v 7b).
Thirdly, this passage makes no contribution to the role of the Joseph story as a bridge between Genesis 12-36 and Exodus. The favourable impression that a man of Jacob's age--20 years more than the age Egyptians hoped and longed to attain--would have made on Pharaoh cannot be seen as an additional factor in the decision to let Jacob and his sons settle in Egypt. This decision had already been made before Jacob's audience began (47:5-6). What then is the purpose of recounting Jacob's audience?

Since any determination of the function or meaning of a text should begin with a grasp of points stressed in that text, it is appropriate to carefully examine Gen 47:7-10. There is evidence of chiasmus in this text which breaks down into five symmetrically arranged parts. Verses 7a and 10b introduce and conclude the account. The central section of the passage, which presents Jacob's great age (vv 8-9), is both preceded and followed by the statement "Jacob blessed [brk] Pharaoh" (vv 7b and 10a). Thus two points are emphasized in this passage, namely Jacob's age (since it occupies over half the passage and is found at its center) and the fact that Jacob brk Pharaoh (since it appears twice).

The true significance of brk in this passage has often been missed. It has, for instance, been translated as "paid respects" and "took his leave" in vv 7 and 10 respectively. Similarly, Roland de Vaux states that in this passage brk "ne signifie pas plus que 'presenta ses compliments' comme dans I Sam. 13,10; 2 Reg. 4,29." These are just two examples of a significant modern trend.

13 J. Vergote, Joseph en Egypte: Genese chap. 37-50 a la lumiere des etudes egyptologiques recentes (Orientalia et Biblica Lovaniensia 3; Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1959) 200-201, reports there are "27 temoignages oil it est dit qu'un personnage a atteint Page de cent dix ans ou dans lesquels le voeu est exprime de vivre cent dix ans sur terre. On est donc en droit de conclure que les cent dix ans etaient consideres comme Page ideal par les Egyptiens."
14 Similarly, Ruppert, Josephserzählung, 149.
15 It is not sufficient to appeal to the fact that Jacob's audience would naturally be associated with the audience of his sons. This association would influence the location of the passage once the decision was made to include it, but it does not explain why this decision was made.
16 Speiser, Genesis, 348-49.
17 Roland de Vaux, La Genese (SBJ 1; Paris: Editions du Cerfs, 1953) 204.
18 Similarly, Driver (Genesis, 371) interprets brk as "saluted" and Bruce Vawter, On Genesis: A New Reading (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 446,
Although this position is willing to grant that Jacob offered an ancient counterpart to "God save the king" at the beginning and end of the audience, it holds that this was nothing more than a formal courtesy. The basis of this interpretation appears to be the assumption that no writer would depict Jacob, the father of a lowly band of shepherds, as having the presumption to bless the visibly superior king of Egypt.\(^{19}\)

This interpretation has not gone without challenge, however. Joseph Scharbert, for instance, asserts,

The pattern A (inferior) \(brk\) B (superior) appears relatively rarely. According to Gen. 47:7, 10 (E), Jacob "blesses" Pharaoh at the beginning and at the end of their interview. Here, "to bless" certainly has in mind a wish for blessing directed to God.\(^{20}\)

Although Scharbert does not give any supporting argumentation, this can be supplied, in part, by Clyde Francisco

Verses 7-12 have the characteristic style and vocabulary of the Priestly account. . . . Although Speiser contends that to bless may, like the word \(shalom\), mean either to greet or to bid farewell (cf. 2 Kings 4:29), it is doubtful that it carries such a meaning in a Priestly context. The verb \(barak\) usually means to bless and certainly carries this significance here.\(^{21}\)

The observation that \(brk\) usually means to bless is correct and of some significance, but by itself this would not be conclusive. The second argument, being based on the assumption that vv 7-10 come from the P document, will not settle the issue since other scholars, such as Scharbert (see the above quotation), attribute them to E.\(^{22}\) Furthermore, Francisco's argument is not cogent for the growing number of

is content with "paid respects" while Stigers (\textit{Genesis}, 319) will allow \(brk\) at most to carry the idea of peace but not of "blessing with the sense of benediction." Similarly the \textit{NAB}, \textit{SBJ}, and \textit{NIV} (margin), but not the \textit{RSV}, \textit{NASB}, or \textit{NEB}.

\(^{19}\)Although supporters of the "greeting" interpretation generally do not reveal the reasoning behind their position, this is likely the most significant consideration. For instance, J. Blenkinsopp, "Genesis 12-50," in \textit{The Pentateuch} (ed. L. Bright; London: Sheed and Ward, 1971) 130, writes, "Jacob's audience with Pharaoh rings true enough, though we may doubt whether he would have blessed the divine monarch, source of life, blessing and every good to his subjects."

\(^{20}\)Scharbert, "\(brk\)," 291.


\(^{22}\)Similarly, Noth, \textit{Pentateuchal Traditions}, 36.
sisters who hold that the Joseph story is not the product of a compilation of various source documents. 

Fortunately, there are considerations which can resolve the issue of the meaning of brk in 47:7-10. First of all, since this term usually means "to bless," it is slightly more probable than not that brk carries this meaning in vv 7 and 10. Secondly, it is not necessary to choose between "to bless" and "to greet" since brk can carry both senses and thus be translated as "to greet with a blessing" or "to bless in greeting." Thirdly, given the protocol of ancient Near Eastern society, it is unlikely that Jacob's sons would have entered Pharaoh's presence without offering some sort of formal greeting. The fact that


24 Speiser (Genesis, 203) acknowledges this fact even though he prefers to interpret brk as "to greet" in 47:7-10.

25 Similarly Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 189. Westermann (p. 190) presents a second argument based on the observation that brk always carries the meaning of blessing in situations involving death or extended temporal separation: "Fur Jakob ist es, auch wenn er hier dem Pharao zum erstenmal begegnet, die Situation des Abschieds. Er stedt vor seinem Tod; an dem Segen, den der aus dem Leben Scheidende weiterzugeben hat, erhalt auch der Pharao des agyptischen Reiches Anteil." This argument, however, is not cogent since the larger context indicates Jacob was 17 years away from his death at the time of this audience (47:28a) and since the immediate context provided by 47:9 need not be interpreted as an expectation of impending death as will be seen in the last third of note 29.

26 The present argument does not require that the formal greeting of the sons be in the form of an explicit blessing. The el-Amarna letters (c. 1400-1360 B.C.) usually begin with a formal greeting although not necessarily in the form of a blessing. Note, for instance, the beginning and ending of letter 288: "To the king, my lord, my Sun-god, say: Thus says Abdiheha, thy servant. At the feet of the king, my lord, seven times and seven times I fall. . . . [To] the scribe of the king, my lord, [Thus] says Abdiheha, the servant. . . . Take in very (?) clear words to the king . . . " (D. Winton Thomas, ed., Documents from Old Testament Times [New York: Harper and Row, 1961] 43-44). This letter indicates that it was important to offer greetings even in proxy audiences with Pharaoh. Cf. 1 Sam 25:24 and 2 Kgs 4:37. Also see Thomas, Documents, 39, 214-16, 251, and 262.
the author of the Joseph story includes Jacob's greeting of blessing cannot thus be attributed to a desire for completeness. Since it is impossible to identify any reason why the narrative would emphasize that Jacob "paid respects" at the beginning and end of the audience, brk should be interpreted as "to bless" or "to greet with a blessing" in our text.27

The import of Jacob's audience with Pharaoh can now be easily grasped. Verses 7 and 10 assert that Jacob blessed Pharaoh. The reference to Jacob's age apparently serves to heighten the significance of this blessing.28 A man whose closeness to God and favour in God's eyes is attested by his attainment of an age greater than any Egyptian dared to hope for blesses Pharaoh.29 Gen 47:7-10 is thus designed to teach that Pharaoh received a powerful blessing through Jacob.

27 This argument should also be cogent for those holding a multiple-source theory for the Joseph story. No matter what sources vv 2-4 and 7-10 are attributed to, it must be granted that the redactor probably made a conscious decision to include the references to blessing in vv 7 and 10.

28 Ruppert, Josephserzählung, 149-50, mistakenly views 47:9 as asserting the shortness of Jacob's life and thus sees a contrast between it and 47:28 which presents Jacob's long life. This tension leads Ruppert to conclude that v 9 (and thus vv 8 and 10 also) must be attributed to a different author (PS) than v 28 (P).

29 The work of Gustave Lefebvre, "L'age de 110 ans et la vieillesse chez les Egyptiens," Comptes Rendus de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres [Paris] (1944) 107-19, provides examples indicating an intimate connection between advanced age and divine favour in Egyptian thought. During the reign of Ramses II (New Kingdom), Bakenkhonsou (died c. 1233 B.C. according to Gustave Lefebvre, Histoire des Grand Pretres d'Amon de Karnak [Paris: Libraire Orientaliste de Paul Geuther, 1929] 134) sought the aid of Amon-Re to reach 110 (p. 110). Bakenkhonsou's successor also prayed to Amon for this privilege (p. 111). In the 5th dynasty (Old Kingdom), one of Pharaoh's officials wrote, "j'ai passe 110 annees de vie que m'a donnees le roi" (p. 108). Since the idea that the Pharaoh was the divine son of the sun god had developed by the 5th dynasty (Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Land of Egypt," Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible [ed. M. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975] 2.234), this text suggests the link between longevity and divine favour was firmly rooted in Egyptian thought. (This conclusion is not invalidated by the research of George Posener, De la divinite du Pharaon [Cahiers de la Societe Asiatique; Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1960] 22, who presents a nuanced interpretation in which the pharaoh was not actually divine in his own right but rather the earthy representative, "l'image vivante, le fils, le substitut, etc." of the god.) Lefebvre's examples do not indicate whether a blessing from a man of 110 years or more was seen as being especially significant. Jacob's reference
A powerful blessing should have a significant effect. The reader of Genesis does not have long to wait before this blessing bears fruit. Within three verses of the conclusion of the report of Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh, there is an extensive account of Joseph's agrarian reforms.

III. Gen 47:13-26: Joseph's Agrarian Reforms

This passage breaks down into four sections of increasing length, each of which describes one aspect of the blessing which came to Pharaoh through the work of Joseph, one of Jacob's sons. In 47:13-14 Joseph collected all the money of Egypt and Canaan and brought it "into Pharaoh's house." In the next section (vv 15-17), all the livestock of the Egyptians was traded for food. Although it is not explicitly stated, it is clearly implied that Pharaoh was again the beneficiary.

In the much larger third section (vv 18-21), Pharaoh gains both land and slaves through Joseph's management. In this section three explicit references (vv 19, 20a, 20c) emphasize that the land became Pharaoh's. Verse 22, an appendage to the third section, indicates that only the priestly land was exempt from this process of royal acquisition.

In the final section (vv 23-26), Joseph sets up an arrangement whereby Pharaoh received one-fifth of future harvests. This additional benefit is stressed by its twofold repetition (vv 24 and 26). This final section, which also reinforces the fact that the land became Pharaoh's and the people his slaves (vv 23 and 25), ends as did the third section by noting that the priestly lands did not come under Pharaoh's control.

Gen 47:13-26 should be interpreted as the fulfillment of the blessing on Pharaoh anticipated by both Gen 46:31-47:6 and 47:7-10. The absence of the term "blessing" in Gen 47:13-26 does not imply that the concept is also absent. As Redford has noted, the narrative of the Joseph story is often allowed to convey its meaning without the

to the shortness of his life compared with his ancestors likely indicates that he expected to live for a number of additional years, thereby heightening the impression that a great degree of divine favour rests on him. The references to the shortness, trouble, and sojourning of Jacob's life (47:9) only pertain to his life before coming to Egypt where his sorrow at the loss of Joseph is healed (46:30), his sojourning is replaced by land possession (47:11), and he can expect to live for a number of additional years. Gen 47:28 notes Jacob continued to live for seventeen additional years in Egypt.
addition of explicit editorial comments. Since Gen 47:13-26 immediately follows two passages which raise the reader's expectation of a blessing for Pharaoh, it would appear that the author (or, if one wishes, the final redactor) thought that the full meaning of the agrarian reforms, which place the stress on Pharaoh's gains, would be sufficiently clear.

There are two other considerations which confirm the validity of this interpretation of Gen 47:13-26. First, this passage appears to be the third in a series of blessings which came to various Egyptians through Joseph. After coming to Egypt, Joseph worked for three different individuals, namely Potiphar, the keeper of the prison, and Pharaoh. Gen 39:1-6, which begins this series, sets the pattern by explicitly stating that Potiphar received a blessing upon his house because he showed favour to Joseph. Although the term brk is not present in Gen 39:19-23, this passage indicates that the keeper of the prison relieved himself of numerous administrative burdens by placing Joseph in a position of authority. There is no reason why the pattern established in Gen 39:1-6 to illustrate Gen 12:3a should fail when Joseph is elevated to the highest authority by Pharaoh (41:39-45). If this consideration is valid, the blessing upon Pharaoh in 47:13-26 is anticipated by three events in the Joseph cycle, namely Pharaoh's elevation of Joseph, Pharaoh's favour to Jacob and his other eleven sons, and Jacob's verbal blessing of Pharaoh.

Secondly, there is no other adequate explanation for the inclusion of an extensive account of Joseph's land reforms. This passage does not contribute to the bridging function of the Joseph story. It is

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30 Redford (Biblical Story of Joseph, 247) notes that the author of Genesis 37-50 "lets the story convey his message without trying to ram it down the readers' throats at every turn of the plot." Cf. note 7.

31 Many commentators, overlooking the key provided by the emphasis placed on Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh in 47:7-10, have either offered no explanation for 47:13-26 or have ventured into speculative interpretations which bear little relationship to the themes and concerns of Genesis. For instance, Davidson (Genesis 12-50, 287) writes, "But why trace this system of land tenure back to Joseph? It could be that to the writer this is but another illustration of Joseph's wisdom and political skill. It is also possible, however, that he is taking an ironic delight in tracing to Joseph a system which made slaves of the Egyptians in a land in which the Hebrews themselves were to be slaves."

32 A favorite explanation of the function of Gen 47:13-26 during the past century was to see this passage as a contribution to the bridging func-
not possible to follow Coats who, seeing no theological import in this passage, suggests that it was included for aetiological reasons.\textsuperscript{33} Although the formula "until this day" is present in the final verse of the passage, Childs has demonstrated that throughout the OT the biblical formula, "until this day," seldom has an aetiological function of justifying an existing phenomenon but in the great majority of cases is a formula of personal testimony added to, and confirming a received tradition.\textsuperscript{34}

Gen 47:13-26 is not an exception to this general rule. The basic aspects of the story are not presented from an aetiological perspective. In addition, "until this day" only appears as a secondary element in the final verse of the passage. Apparently its function is to confirm the factuality of the story concerning the agrarian reforms. The only visible

tion of the Joseph story. For example, R. S. Candlish, The Book of Genesis (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1884) 550-52, writes, "The account of Joseph's conduct [in Gen 47:13-26], as ruler in Egypt, is an altogether irrelevant, not to say impertinent, interruption, unless we hold that it is brought in with a view to its bearing on the fortunes of Israel. ... It concentrated authority in one royal head. And so it made it easier for the Pharaoh who was Joseph's friend to secure the peaceful settlement of the family in Goshen; while it also made it easier, long afterwards, for the Pharaoh 'who knew not Joseph' to enslave and oppress the nation into which the family was then fast growing." Similar explanations are presented by M. M. Kalisch, Genesis (Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament 1; London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Robert, 1858) 699-704, and W. H. Griffith-Thomas, Genesis XXXVII-L: A Devotional Commentary (London: Religious Tract Society, 1909) 142-43 and 147-48. Three considerations are against this interpretation. First, it does not explain why 47:13-26 does not immediately follow chapter 41. Secondly, this view assumes Pharaoh was relatively powerless before the reforms took place. However, a king who could exact a tax of one-fifth of the harvests for seven years (41:34, 48) would likely have the power to settle a band of 70 shepherds and their flocks in Egypt. Thirdly, 47:13-26 gives the impression that Pharaoh only got control of the land during the seventh year of the famine. (The fact that it is only at the time of the sale of the land that there is any concern for seed to plant [47:19 and 23] suggests this event took place in the final year of the famine.) Thus, the settlement of Jacob and his household in Goshen, which took place during the famine (47:12), apparently occurred before Pharaoh had gained control of the land and people of Egypt.

\textsuperscript{33} Coats, Canaan to Egypt, 53. Similarly, Westermann, Genesis 37-50, 192 and 198 and von Rad, Genesis, 410-11.

\textsuperscript{34} Brevard S. Childs, “A Study of the Formula ‘Until this Day,’” JBL 82 (1963) 292.
explanation for the inclusion of the story of Joseph's agrarian reforms is that it was intended to fulfill a theological role by demonstrating that substantial blessing came to Pharaoh.

It is thus best to interpret Gen 47:13-26 as a blessing upon Pharaoh. If this interpretation is rejected, then Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh is left unfulfilled, a major pattern in the Joseph story is broken, and Gen 47:13-26 remains without an adequate explanation.

Conclusion

A brief exposition of the meaning of Gen 46:31-47:26 will serve as an appropriate conclusion to this study. A major function of this passage is to contribute to the bridging function of the Joseph story. It explains how, through Joseph's skillful use of the fact that his brothers were shepherds by occupation, Jacob and his sons came to settle in Goshen, a north-eastern border province that would not normally have been available to them. In this way the passage contributes to the transition from the patriarchal stories to the account of the exodus.

A second function is served by this passage. The account of the brothers' audience places additional stress on the fact that Israel was separated from the Egyptians by her occupation. This makes a con-

35 Of all the works consulted for this paper only three showed any awareness of the theological meaning of Gen 47:13-26. Commendation must be extended to M. Kline, "Genesis," The New Bible Commentary: Revised (ed. by D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer; 3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 112, who entitles 46:28-47:27 as "Israel, Blessed and Blessing." Kline supports his interpretation with the observation that "the economic measures instituted by Joseph were viewed by the Egyptians themselves as a favour, indeed, as their salvation (cf. v. 25) in the desperate famine emergency." He does not, however, note that Pharaoh is seen as the primary recipient of blessing in vv 13-26 or that this is in response to Jacob's blessing in the first half of the chapter. Although W. L. Humphrey ("The Joseph Story," IDBSup, 490) approaches this interpretation, he does not grasp it firmly: "Israel is seen functioning as a source of blessing for the nations (cf 12:1-3). This narrative [the Joseph story] is remarkably open to the possibility of creative interaction with the Egyptians; it is in Egypt that the sons of Israel find sustenance, it is for the pharaoh (47:13-26) that Joseph works, and the patriarch Jacob himself blesses the Egyptian ruler." Finally, P. Ellis (The Yahwist: The Bible's First Theologian [Notre Dame: Fides, 1968] 48) identifies 47:13-26 as a contribution to the "Blessing on the Nations" motif. Unfortunately, Ellis does not expand on this suggestive note nor does he offer any support for its validity.
tribution to one of the minor themes of Genesis, the distinctiveness of the Israelite line.

Thirdly, the passage illustrates the principle set forth in Gen 12:3a. Nations and individuals bring blessing upon themselves by their response to the chosen line. Pharaoh's twice recounted command to settle Jacob and his sons in the best of the land (47:6 and 11) awakens the reader's expectation that a significant blessing will fall on Pharaoh. The account of Jacob's audience, which stressed that Jacob blessed Pharaoh, provides further preparation for the reader's proper interpretation of Joseph's agrarian reforms as a divine blessing upon Pharaoh.

The concluding chapters of Genesis are thus highlighted by three, not just two, major blessing passages. The blessing of Pharaoh by Israel (47:7-10 and 13-26) precedes the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (48:8-22) and the blessing of the twelve tribes (49:1-27).

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The Function of Jacob's Encounter
at Peniel in the Jacob Cycle

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Although the passage in Genesis 32:23-33 has been frequently treated by scholars using a variety of analytical tools, the question of the function of the passage in the context of the Jacob cycle has not received the attention which it merits. This article deals primarily with that question and proposes a more comprehensive solution to it, a solution which demonstrates the intimate relationship of the tradition history of the passage, its theology; and its purpose in the Jacob cycle.

Scholars are generally agreed that this passage has had a long, complex tradition history. However, there is a wide divergence of opinion about the point in the history of the tradition at which different elements of its present form entered. The parallels cited by Gunkel to various elements of the story have established to

1 Genesis 32:22-32 in English Bibles. The verses in Hebrew are always one ahead of the verses in English in Genesis 32. The verse enumeration in this article corresponds to that of the Hebrew Bible.

a relative degree of certainty that those elements are ancient. The parallels include: 1) the attack by a deity, often a river god, upon a man; 2) the victory by the human hero over the deity and the extortion from the deity of some blessing or gift; 3) the fact that the deity roams only at night and must disappear at daybreak; 4) the reluctance of the deity to give his name as a result of the belief that to know a name is to have power over its bearer. It has been argued that the story was originally a Canaanite myth not associated with Jacob and probably not associated with Peniel. Although the story pattern is certainly ancient, the Israelite tradition cannot begin any earlier than the point at which Jacob is identified as the hero. There is little possibility of precise reconstruction earlier than this point. It is also relatively certain that the final element of the passage, the aetiology in verse 33, is late. It stands outside of the inclusio which encloses the story and adds no essential information to the story in terms of its purpose in the Jacob cycle as a whole. The earliest and latest elements of the passage, then, have been established to a relative degree of certainty. Scholars have proposed a number of reconstructions detailing the points at which the remaining elements of the present tradition entered. No one reconstruction is completely accepted, and it would be difficult to propose a reconstruction that is particularly new or convincing.

Scholars have also pointed out a large number of the literary devices, especially word plays, contained within Genesis 32:23-33 and its immediate context. The words mahaneh, "camp," and minhah, "gift," are important words in Genesis 32. The story of the place name, Mahanayim in 32:2f. anticipates the events narrated in the chapter. The reference to "two camps" seems to be deliberately ambiguous. Are the two camps Jacob's and Yahweh's, Jacob's and Esau's, or the two divisions of Jacob's caravan? The verb 'abar, "to cross," also occurs frequently in this context (32:11, 17, 22, 23, 24; 33:3, 14), and statements using the verb form an inclusio around the narrative of Jacob's encounter with the 'elohim. The names ya'aqob and yabboq form a lovely word play with the verb ye'aqeb, "he wrestles," in verse 25. In fact, the two uses of the verb 'abaq with

3 Gunkel, HKAT, p. 361.
5 See especially, Schildenberger, Miscellanea Biblica B. Ubach, p. 80.
6 See the discussion of Fokkeiman, pp. 199ff.
‘immo, "with him," form a framework around the narration of the wrestling match itself in verses 25f. The noun panim, "face," occurs five times in verses 21f. and twice in 33:10, aside from its use in the Penuel/Peniel (vss. 31f.). Finally, the root nsl "to deliver," found in verse 31 is the same verb used in Jacob's prayer in verse 12. It is obvious that Genesis 32:23-33 represents a sophisticated literary piece with intricate connections with the passages which surround it.

Some scholars have argued that the story in Genesis 32:23-33 is completely out of place, that it has nothing to do with the meeting of Jacob and Esau. Thus the passage is nothing more than a collection of aetiologies about the names Israel and Penuel/Peniel and the Israelite tradition against eating the sinew of the thigh. Noth is representative:

... the Penuel episode (Gen. 32:23-33 [J]), which is bound very firmly to a specific place, was inserted still later in a rather loose fashion and intrinsically has nothing at all to do with the narrative theme "Jacob and Esau." Rather, it is a distinctly separate narrative which originally was concerned with cultic matters and all sorts of etiological secondary interests.  

Elsewhere Noth refers to the passage as having an "infelicitous place in the midst of the story of Jacob's encounter with Esau."  

Others have argued that the narrative functions as an answer to Jacob's prayer in 32:10ff. Jacob knows that Esau will not harm him, because he has prevailed over a stronger opponent, the 'elohim, from whom he has also extracted a blessing (vs. 29). Thus Jacob compares seeing the face of Esau, who has received Jacob favorably, with seeing the face of 'elohim (33:10). This understanding of the function of Genesis 32:23-33 is good as far as it goes, but it does not take into account the entire Jacob cycle and the significance of the story of Jacob's encounter at the Jabbok in relation to the themes which run throughout the Jacob cycle.

Fishbane has attempted to deal with the entire Jacob cycle. He argues that the Jacob cycle (Gen. 25:19-35:22 according to Fishbane) consists of a chiasm. In general, Fishbane's scheme is quite correct, especially with regard to the narratives in Genesis 27-33. Genesis 27:1-

7 Noth, p. 95.
8 Noth, p. 7.
9 See especially Fokkelman, p. 220, who argues that the use of the root nsl in vs. 31 is a direct reference back to Jacob's prayer for deliverance in vs. 12, where nsl has been used.
10 Fishbane, JJS, 28, pp. 15-38.
28:9 contains traditions about the competition between Jacob and Esau. Jacob's encounter with God and his angels is told in 28:10-22. In chapter 29 Jacob meets with Laban and is deceived by him, and 30:1-24 contains an interlude about the birth of Jacob's children. The material which then follows in 30:25---33:20 corresponds in reverse order to the material in 27:1---30:24. In 30:25-31:55, Jacob and Laban again rival one another. Chapter 32 tells of two encounters of Jacob with supernatural beings and of Jacob's preparations to meet Esau. The next chapter contains Jacob's meeting with Esau.

The chiastic structure of the Jacob cycle is significant in terms of the theme and purpose of the cycle as a whole. At the structural center of the chiasm lies the story of the birth of Jacob's children, the founders and namesakes of the twelve tribes of Israel. As various scholars have observed, the individuals, Esau and Laban, here represent the political entities of Edom and Aram, respectively. The Jacob cycle tells how the nation of Israel, represented in its ancestors Jacob and his sons, contends with Edom and Aram, represented in their ancestors Esau and Laban. It further describes how Jacob/Israel prevailed over all opponents and gained control of the land. The specifying of the children of Jacob, the fathers of the tribes of Israel, lies at the center of the narrative both structurally and functionally. The Jacob cycle is the story of the perseverance and prevalence of Israel.

The narrative in Genesis 32:23-33 corresponds to the theophany in 28:10-22 thus filling a needed link in the chiastic structure. But it also serves a much more important function. Throughout the Jacob cycle three themes predominate: strife, deception, and blessing. Before their birth, Jacob and Esau struggle within the womb of their mother (Gen. 25:22). Jacob is born holding onto the heel of Esau (25:26). His name, "Jacob," characterizes him both as a fighter ("heel-grabber") and as a deceiver ("supplanter"; cf. 27:36). Jacob deceives Esau into trading his birthright (bekorah, 25:29ff.) and then deceives his father, Isaac, into granting the blessing (berekah) to him instead of Esau (27:5-45). Jacob's dealings with Laban are also seen as a struggle. Laban strikes first, deceiving Jacob by giving him Leah instead of Rachel (29:15-30).¹¹ Yahweh blesses Laban on Jacob's account so

¹¹ The irony here deserves comment. In the case of Jacob and Esau, the younger brother is favored, and the older serves the younger. Now, Jacob is appropriately deceived into marrying the older sister, Leah, first rather than the younger, Rachel, for whom he has worked.
that Laban is reluctant to release Jacob (30:27). Jacob reciprocates by deceiving Laban (30:27-31:16). Again, God blesses Jacob so that he becomes wealthy in spite of Laban's deceptions (31:5ff.). Laban accuses Jacob of deceiving (31:27). He comes apparently to fight with Jacob, but God protects Jacob and warns Laban against doing him harm (31:24, 29ff.). Even Rachel deceives her father by stealing the household gods (31:33ff.). Jacob responds to Laban's accusations with his own complaints that Laban has deceived him by changing his wages numerous times, but God has thwarted Laban's attempts by blessing Jacob and protecting him (31:36-42). Finally, the encounter with Esau is feared by Jacob because of Esau's superior strength in battle (32:7). Even here Jacob acts craftily in the arrangement of his caravan and in sending a train of gifts to Esau (32:7, 14ff.). The Jacob cycle ends with a reiteration of the promise of blessing for Jacob (35:9-15).

These themes of strife, deceit, and blessing come to a climax in the narrative of Genesis 32:23-33. Jacob now faces the most difficult conflict of his life, because his opponent is no longer simply a man, but 'elohim. Deception is involved in the struggle when the opponent apparently employs a trick of fighting to put Jacob's thigh out of joint. Jacob receives the most important blessing of his life in the change of his name to Israel. The climactic verse is verse 29. Jacob's name is changed to Israel, because he has prevailed in his struggles with human as well as divine. The narrative which follows about Jacob's meeting with Esau helps to fill out the chiastic structure of the Jacob cycle, but it is clearly anticlimactic. Jacob has persevered. Assuredly, he will not come to harm or defeat at the hands of Esau. He has prevailed and is supremely blessed.

It is important to recall at this point that the Jacob cycle, according to those who follow standard source analysis, is really the story of

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12 Gunkel, HKAT, p. 361, argued that the original story had Jacob using a trick of fighting to injure the opponent. This would be better in line with the comparative material in which the human tricks the deity into defeat. It also fits well the character of Jacob as a deceiver in the Jacob cycle. But it is difficult to see why the original story would be altered at this point, unless the change came about merely by confusion (note the confusing use of pronouns in vs. 25a to denote subjects and objects). At any rate, if such a confusion did occur, it clearly took place before the incorporation of the story into the Yahwistic Epic and thus does not alter the Yahwist's theology or the importance which he gives to the story.
the nation Israel.\textsuperscript{13} The point made by the writer is that the nation of Israel has prevailed, prevailed over all opponents, not just Edom and Aram. This theological point indicates that the Jacob cycle in its present form stems largely from a time when the nation of Israel could identify with the patriarch as having come out of all its struggles as victor. This notion accords well with the conditions of Israel during the Davidic and early Solomonic age, the era in which the Yahwistic Epic is usually dated.\textsuperscript{14} Most of the Jacob cycle is, in fact, attributed to the Yahwist.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, the Yahwist, writing during the era of Israel's greatest supremacy, describes the nation through the life story of the patriarch Jacob/Israel. The Yahwist describes his nation, like its ancestor, as having acquired the blessing of Yahweh, as a result of which they have endured against all their opponents, and have become preeminent.\textsuperscript{16} Yahweh's covenant with Abraham and his promise to bless the patriarch, linked in Yahwistic material with, Yahweh's

\textsuperscript{13} Despite the lack of scholarly consensus in regard to details, Wellhausen's classical formulation of the documentary hypothesis remains the standard approach to the Tetratuch (Genesis-Numbers). Brevard Childs has observed: "Of more influence-on the history of scholarship was the work of scholars who continued to operate within Wellhausen's general framework but sought further to refine the sources. In the course of the refinement important weaknesses emerged which often unintentionally began to dissolve the reigning consensus. . . Long after the early confidence in the classic documentary theory had disappeared, critical scholars continued to work with Wellhausen's source analysis largely because of the lack of any new consensus by which to replace it." \textit{Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture} (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979) p. 114. F. M. Cross has offered a significant modification of the documentary hypothesis. He prefers to speak of J and E as variant prose forms of a single, older Epic cycle. He also holds that P was never a separate source, but only the post-exilic editor of the Epic traditions. Cross' view is important for understanding the purpose of the story in Gen. 32:23-33 in the various levels of tradition. See Cross' discussion in his \textit{Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic} (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 293-325.

\textsuperscript{14} F. M. Cross, \textit{Canaanite Myth}, pp. ix, 124, 263ff., 293.

\textsuperscript{15} Most of the Jacob cycle is J material. There are sections which can only be characterized as Epic material, that is, J and E combined. P material exists in the Jacob cycle, but it is not common. Material generally attributed to P is: 25:19f.; 26:34f.; 27:46-28:9; 31:18b; 35:9-13, 15, 22b-29.

\textsuperscript{16} I have referred to Jacob's opponent throughout simply as '\textit{elohim}'. It is a common notion among scholars that the Yahwist identified the opponent with Yahweh, but I am not convinced that this was the case. The name Yahweh is never mentioned in 32:23-33. It also seems unlikely that J would have accepted the idea that Yahweh was defeated by a human. It seems more likely that J has inherited a tradition about Jacob defeating a minor deity and that J has remained faithful to the language of the older tradition, though he may not have understood it (cf. Hos. 12:4f., where the opponent is seen as an angel, and '\textit{elohim} and \textit{mal'ak}, "angel," are found in parallel. The \textit{el} element in the names 'Israel' and 'Peniel' can clearly be used as a generic appellative (see Cross, \textit{Canaanite Myth}, pp. 45ff.).
covenant with and blessing of David, has been observed and discussed by various scholars.\(^{17}\) In the Jacob story the Yahwist provides a similar link between the patriarchs, especially Jacob, and the Davidic kingdom. The blessing of Yahweh over Jacob brings about his prevalence over all opponents, his safe return to Canaan, and his establishment in the land. The blessing of Yahweh over the nation of Israel results in their successful return to Canaan from Egypt and, under David, their victory over all enemies and hegemony over the entire land promised to the patriarchs. For the Yahwist, Israel's blessing under David is foreshadowed in Yahweh's blessing of Jacob.

In editing the Epic sources, J and E, the Priestly tradent(s) attached another meaning to the Jacob cycle, one that communicated a message relevant to the Israel of his time. The P school probably edited the Epic sources in the Tetrateuch in the sixth century B.C., when Israel was in Babylonian exile.\(^{18}\) The present chiastic arrangement of the narratives in the Jacob cycle is possibly the result of the editorial work of P. At any rate, for the Priestly tradent(s) also the nation of Israel was embodied in the patriarch Jacob. The major importance of the Jacob story for P was in the return of Jacob to the land of Canaan. In Jacob, P saw the hope that exiled Israel would also return to the land of their heritage and again prevail over their opponents.\(^ {19}\)


\(^{18}\) See Cross, pp. 293-325.

\(^{19}\) For P, this tradition must have posed difficult theological problems. Since P was monotheistic, Jacob's opponent could not have been another deity. The opponent could have been understood as an angel of Yahweh, but for P, e1 consistently refers to Yahweh (Cross, p. 46). Also, for P, this tradition about Jacob's struggle with God and particularly the name 'Israel' were truly representative of the nation's character and history. Israel's continual struggles with God had resulted in their exile in Babylon. Thus, in contrast to J, P took a negative view of the tenacity common to the patriarch and the nation of Israel. Yahweh's blessing of Jacob and returning him to Canaan in spite of himself furnished P's hope that God would deal similarly with Jacob's descendants.

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COVENANT AND THE KINGDOM:
GENESIS 1-3 AS FOUNDATION
FOR BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

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The thesis of this paper is that the key to a proper biblical hermeneutic and theology is to be found in the covenant concept of both the OT and NT, especially in the form that concept takes in Genesis. The centrality of the covenant to biblical theology has, of course, been recognized for years by biblical theologians, but only since the relatively recent recovery of comparative covenant materials from the ancient Near East have biblical covenant form and content been reevaluated and tied in closely to the meaning and even structure of the biblical message. M. Kline, in a publication entitled The Structure of Biblical Authority, has argued, on the basis of his own previous studies of biblical and ancient Near Eastern treaty and covenant forms, that the entire Bible is formulated on the model of an extensive and expansive covenant. That is, the Bible does not merely contain covenant records, but is itself and in its entirety a covenant text.


4 Ibid., 75.
While this may be an overstatement, it does suggest the dominance of the covenant idea in certain segments of biblical scholarship.

I. Biblical Concept of Covenant

By "covenant" is meant "a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." The Hebrew word used to express "covenant" is הֵרָב a term that first occurs in Gen 6:18 and that appears about 285 times in the OT. It is translated by Greek στατικής in the LXX and in the NT. Though the terms are not exactly synonymous, the Greek referring more to a "will" or "last testament," the concept of a legal contract at least is common to both.

Until the advent of 19th century archaeological research, very little was known of covenants in the ancient East apart from the OT and even these (including the biblical) were little understood. The discovery, publication, and study of cuneiform tablets and other inscriptive material, especially from Boghazkoy, the old Hittite capital, have shed considerable light on international treaty and covenant arrangements from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (ca. 1400-1200 B.C.). This is particularly instructive to biblical scholarship because according to the traditional dating the Mosaic covenants fall within this period or a little earlier.

The Hittite treaties reveal that such contracts existed in one of two forms: (1) The parity treaty between equals and (2) the sovereign-vassal (or suzerainty) treaty which was drawn up by a superior power and imposed upon an inferior. Both types generally contain at the minimum certain clauses including a preamble, an historical prologue, the list of stipulations, the witnesses, the curses and blessings, and provision for deposit and public reading of the covenant text. The major difference, of course, was that the superior party in the suzerainty treaty coerced the vassal into acceptance of the fidelity to the covenant terms while he himself had no such obligations except as he voluntarily subscribed to his own stipulations.

The significance of all this to biblical studies is the fact that biblical covenant form resembles almost exactly Hittite treaty form, specifically the sovereign-vassal type. The Covenant Code of Exodus 20-23 and the entire Book of Deuteronomy are the most outstanding

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6 BDB 136-37.
8 For the following, see especially Mendenhall, BA 17 (n. 2 above).
examples of this type. It is quite apparent that Moses undoubtedly utilized already existing treaty formulas in the construction of biblical treaty contracts between God and individuals or God and Israel. And the comparison does not end with the literary correspondences. An essential feature of certain ancient Near Eastern treaty-making was the slaughter of an animal, often an ass, as, perhaps, an example of the fate to be expected by the covenant party who violated his treaty obligations.9 There was also the sense of the binding together of the contracting parties through the mutuality of the animal sacrifice and the sprinkling of its blood upon the treaty participants or their representatives. The importance of slaughter and blood to biblical covenants is, of course, well known.

The reader of the OT who examines it from this covenant stance will see that covenant texts occupy a very significant portion of biblical composition. Deuteronomy, for example, is recognized as being almost entirely covenantal in its form and content,10 as are substantial parts of the rest of the OT. And, if Kline is correct, the entire Bible might be so analyzed. What is important now is to see that these individual covenants, far from being isolated and unrelated, are parts or successive elaborations of a basic covenant theme. All covenant references in the Bible are then but progressively revealed modifications and explanations of that motif. This, we feel, is the interpretive key to Scripture, a key which, applied consistently and skillfully, will unlock the mysteries of God's Word to one who sincerely wishes to understand and communicate God's redemptive message with authority and conviction.11

II. Covenant in Genesis 1-3

Let us turn now to a systematic examination of the covenant theme in the early chapters of Genesis with the end in view of establishing our thesis that it is at the heart of divine revelation and that it can provide the organizing principle around which a consistent and comprehensive biblical theology may be developed. Because Genesis is the book of beginnings it is not surprising that covenant should first be found there, and, in fact, found in more specific

10 For an excellent commentary structured along covenant lines see J. A. Thompson, Deuteronomy (TOTC; Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1974).
11 This notion has been picked up and published recently by W. J. Dumbrell, Covenant and Creation (Exeter: Paternoster, 1984).
instances than anywhere else in the Bible. So fundamental is the covenant theme there it is not an exaggeration to say that Genesis provides the principal statement of God's purposes of which the remainder of the biblical witness is an enlargement and interpretation. The understanding of his creative and redemptive ways must issue from their initial statement in Genesis and not from a stance that considers Genesis to be only prolegomenon or retrojection.

The climax of God's creative work as revealed in Genesis 1-2 was the creation of man, an event reserved for the last part of the sixth day. In conjunction with the creative act appears the statement by God concerning its meaning and purpose. "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground" (Gen 1:26-28, NIV).

In its broadest sense, this mandate is a greatly abbreviated covenant expression in which the sovereign (God) outlines to his vassal (man) the meaning of the vassal's existence and the role that he is to play in the sovereign's eternal plans. Man was created, then, to serve as the agent of God in implementing God's sovereign will and sway over the universe. His subsequent fall into sin made him incapable of adequately fulfilling the covenant requirements, as we shall see, so he was forced to attempt to do so with great difficulty and struggle. The history of the human race is testimony to the miserable failure of man to accomplish the covenant mandate, a failure overcome only by the Second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, who perfectly demonstrated on earth the authority that was inherent in the Adamic covenant and who, moreover, by his perfect obedience to it has guaranteed the ultimate restoration of redeemed man to the original covenant privileges. Let us consider several ramifications of this covenant statement.

Mankind as God's Vice-Regent

That man is to serve as vice-regent of God is seen clearly in the fact that he is the "image" and "likeness" of God. The former of these terms, מִרְרָא, is the word ordinarily used in the OT to speak of an idol

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12 In all its forms נְבָא occurs twenty-seven times in Genesis or about one-tenth of all the OT uses.

or other object carved or fashioned to resemble the deity that it presents.14 The Greek, both in the LXX and NT, usually translates it εἰκών, from which English "icon" is directly derived.15 The word translated "likeness" in our versions is רוח a term that is equally as common (25 occurrences), and that appears occasionally as a synonym for מָלֶך רוח (Gen 1:26; 5:3; Ezek 23:14-15).16 In our text the two words seem to be in a parallel relationship, indicating their synonymity.

That this imago dei represents is, of course, a matter of divergent opinions, but at the least it is that quality in man that makes him different from and superior to all else in the created universe.17 It is our judgment that much more is involved, for the context of the passage is quite suggestive in this respect. For example, the first person plural pronoun is used by God consistently throughout the narrative. This cannot be explained by reference to the plurality of Elohim, for that plural of the divine name is nearly universally interpreted as the pluralis maiestatis or plural of majesty.18 Moreover, ordinarily the name Elohim occurs with singular personal or relative pronouns. The appearance of "us," then, rather than "me" is a clue that points to a plural of number, a plural that suggests the divine Godhead-Father, Son, and Spirit.19

The Spirit had already been introduced as that person of God who "moved" (better "hovered" or "brooded") over the face of the deep (Gen 1:2). It would appear appropriate that the Son should here be identified as that divine person of whom man is the image. The OT speaks elsewhere of Wisdom who is hypostatized and described as at least a co-Creator with God (cf. Prov 8:30). And, of course, the NT specifically identifies Jesus Christ as the Creator an 1:1-3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2). There is clearly a straight line of development from OT מָלֶך רוח to Mishnaic אָדָם מָלֶך רוח to NT Logos.20

There is, furthermore, explicit evidence that both the Father and the Holy Spirit are invisible, spiritual entities and that only the Son is attributed with any bodily manifestation. This may be seen in the aT appearances of God as the Angel of the Lord or as the "Son of Man." Most fully and unequivocally, it is seen in the NT incarnate Christ.

15 BAGD 222.
16 H. D. Preuss, "חָסְדֵי" TDOT 3 (1978) 7-00.
18 GKC #124g.
We would suggest, therefore, that the image of God entails also a phenomenal aspect, a relationship between man and the Son of Man so close that the former could be said in the strictest sense of the term to be the image of the latter. If man of the covenant is to fulfill his covenantal mandate, we must attempt to discover how this fulfillment is described. Unfortunately, the evidence is sparse because man sinned before realizing the potentialities involved. We do learn, however, that he was to cultivate the ground (2:5, 15), that he had access to everything in Eden but the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (2:17), and that he had the incredible ability to name all the animals (2:19), a feat that presupposes either the skill of writing and recording or the possession of a phenomenal memory! Tragically, however, sin marred the image in at least the area of man's covenant capacities, so that we can only guess at the powers that man could have exercised had he been obedient. Or need we only guess? Paul on several occasions refers to a Second Adam, Jesus Christ (Rom 5:14-17; 1 Cor 15:22, 45). This Second Adam presumably was more than one who came to undo the work of sin in human life; He came also to demonstrate the possibilities inherent in sinless man. In other words, Jesus Christ, often described as the Son of Man, was not only God but was man par excellence, the man whom God intended Adam to be. Should we not seek in the life of Jesus, the Perfect Man, some insights into the type of man created by God to carry out the Adamic covenant?

*Jesus as Second Adam*

A few examples from the Gospels must suffice. In the story of Jesus' calming of the stormy sea, the disciples are so amazed at what they see that they ask incredulously, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him" (Matt 8:27; cf. Mark 4:36-41; Luke 8:27-75)? Or one is reminded of the need for the payment of taxes to Caesar. Jesus on one occasion told Peter to go to the sea, throw in a hook, and find a coin in the mouth of the first fish caught (Matt 17:24-17). When Jesus was about to enter Jerusalem in triumph at the beginning of Passion Week, He first of all amazed His disciples by riding on an unbroken donkey (Matt 21:7) and then proceeded to show His lordship over a fig tree by cursing it so that it withered immediately (Matt 21:18-22). These evidences of power over nature are usually attributed to His deity, but there is every reason to believe

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21 For the view that human-form theophanies are limited to Christ see J. A: Borland, *Christ in the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1978) 65-72. Borland correctly; does not limit man as the image of God to the physical appearance of the Son (pp. 106-7) for, as he suggests, Christ did not exist permanently in human form in OT times.
(“What kind of man is this?”) that Jesus was exercising the God-given authority of Adam, an authority designed for the entire human race, forfeited by sinful Adam, and restored in and through Christ (cf. also Ps 8). That man will once again possess these powers may be seen in the beautiful eschatological pictures of the OT prophets in which, for example, "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the young lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them" (Isa 11:6, NIV).

**Mankind as Nature's Sovereign**

Another feature to note in the covenant of Gen 1:26-28 is that of the command to rule over the fish, the birds, and large and small land animals (1:26) and to "subdue" the earth (1:28). The verb "to rule" is הָדַּר usually used in connection with the absolute domination of one party by another (Lev 25:43, 46, 53; 26:17, 1 Kgs 5:4, 30; Isa 14:2; Ps 110:2). "To subdue" is שָׂבַע which means "to tread down." The same word is used in Mic 7:19 to speak of God treading iniquities underfoot. In, another form it occurs in Jer 34:11 in the sense of bringing one into bondage or subservience. Hence, these two verbs are practically synonymous. This prerogative of man was seen, of course, in his naming of the animals and his care of the garden. And we have already suggested that Jesus, the perfect Son of Man, demonstrated in his own life on earth His ability to dominate the various aspects of the natural world. Moreover, man, when fully redeemed, will resume his covenant responsibilities and privileges, by the grace of God, and forever will reign over the universe as God's agent in fulfillment of the reason for his very creation.

In stark contradiction to the idealized situation of the covenant stipulation of Genesis 1 is the reality of human existence vis-a-vis the covenant after the fall. Man now knows that he is naked, an understanding which not only derives from his possession of the knowledge of good and evil, but which makes him acutely aware that he cannot fulfill the covenant terms. He was told to have dominion over all things, but he failed to govern even his wife and his own appetites. He has forfeited the right to reign and therefore does not have the ability to reign. His attempt to undo his nakedness and, hence, recover his dignity and lordship is frustrated by the Lord who shows him, by covering him with the skins of a slaughtered beast, that another

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22 No explicit word for "man" is used in Matt 8:27 but the Greek ποταπός ("sort," "kind") is a common substitute for the term "person" (see BAGD 694-95).


way--a super-human way--must be found. God must do the covering and the restoring or there is no hope at all.

The Fall and Covenant Modification

But to move more directly into the covenant terms as they are modified for fallen man in Gen 3:14-19, we observe that the original mandate ("to reign, to multiply, to subdue") is preserved but in an obviously qualified way. That is, man still has the rights and obligations of the original covenant, but will accomplish them only with pain and arduous labor. And, moreover, even this pain and labor could not bring about the desired ends for which man was created were God not to intervene in history in the seed of the woman and to fulfill in this seed His sovereign purposes. The second Adam was to do what God had required of the first, and impute to every Adam of every age the perfect obedience of the mandate which he achieved by his life, death, and resurrection.

In the first place, because an animal (the serpent) was the vehicle of man's temptation and fall, animals must, in general, be condemned for insubordination though the serpent is especially cursed (3:14). Man the sovereign had become the slave, a monstrous imbalance which must be righted.

A result of this imbalance was a hostility between man and animal, an antagonism suggested here but explicitly spelled out later on in the Noahic covenant (Gen 9:2). Animals would be docile only by training and discipline, not as a matter of course.26 Only with the reestablishment of the paradise world could there be the compatible relationship between man and animals that God had originally intended.

Satan, incarnate in the serpent, is, of course, the real object of the rebuke of the Lord, for it was he who had attempted to subvert the covenant arrangement, possibly because he himself had originally served as vice-regent of God (cf. Isa 14; Ezek 28). The enmity between man and the serpent was only an illustration of the more profound and consequential enmity between man and Satan, and indeed, between the Seed of the woman and Satan. The underlying cause of the disruption of the covenant would be its chief victim when the covenant was renewed and perfected by the Seed of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second act of insubordination, that of the woman to the man and both to God, the result would entail the on-going covenant stipulations but with the added ingredients of pain, a powerful attrac-

26 G. Vos, Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 64.
tion of wife to husband,\textsuperscript{27} debilitating labor, and death. Man must carry out the mandate but the cost would be high-too high in fact for him actually to bring it to completion himself. The promise of the seed and the evidence of divine grace in the garments of skin pointed to a covenant completeness that would be a future reality.

In the meantime, the command to be fruitful and multiply would be complicated by the pain of the woman in childbirth. The injunction to man and woman to rule over all things would be tempered by the rule of the man over the woman, by the subordination of her desires to his. The earth which was to be subject to man and the ready source of his nourishment now would yield its riches only with toil. And the very soil which he tilled, and from which he originated, would eventually master him and cover him in death.

\textit{Fallen Man's Covenant Capacity}

We are still left, however, with the intriguing question of the extent of unredeemed man's ability and right to pursue the covenant stipulations of Gen 1:26-18. At the outset we must be reminded that unregenerate man is generally not even aware of a covenant mandate, except possibly "intuitively," to say nothing of a command to pursue it. But it cannot be argued that he does pursue it even in his blindness. Man's environmental struggles all represent his endeavors to \textit{be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.} Ironically (or perhaps even predictably) he appears to be waging a losing battle as the present-day ecological concern so eloquently testifies. Man carries out the mandate, but as is true with every thing else that he does as fallen creature without divine orientation, he perverts it, misunderstands it, exploits it, and finally seems to be in danger of destroying it. But this is not to be, for the Adamic covenant was without condition-man was created to fulfill it and he will, both partially and imperfectly as fallen first Adam, and fully and perfectly in and through Second Adam. The ecological crisis is not, fatal, but only witnesses to the inadequacies of rebellious man. Christ has triumphed not only over death and sin but over the environment. He will undercut the ecological peril by bringing in the fruits of His redemptive work, even a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

One thought that is staggering in the face of man's inability to the Adamic covenant perfectly is his sheer accomplishment

\textsuperscript{27} This seems to be the best understanding of the phrase "unto your husband [will be] your desire". So W. C. Kaiser: Jr., \textit{Toward an Old Testament Ethics} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 204-5. As Kaiser points out, the wrong in this is that in turning in such a way to her husband the woman will turn from dependence on God.
scientifically and technologically in spite of his limitations. He has, by dint of creative and imaginative genius, risen to heights of achievement undreamed of by his predecessors of only a century ago. He has not only been able to dominate this planet with his superior intellectual powers, but has now planted his feet on the moon and his implements of discovery on the planets as well. All this, we feel, is part of the mandate, but only its superficial, external part. The factor that is missing is the ascription to God of the glory and praise due His name. Man fulfills the covenant, even to a remarkable degree, but at the same time he does not fulfill it at all for he does not operate as the conscious agent of God. Part of the meaning of the image of God is to act for God and represent God, but man will not have God to rule over him.

III. The Prospects of Covenant Fulfillment

The Christian man, on the other hand, is able to understand the covenant and even largely to fulfill it in points. And where he cannot fulfill it or overcome the liabilities built into it because of sin, he can at least await with patience and perseverance the redemptive day: when these liabilities will be removed in fact and when he will enter into the covenant relationship with the saints of all the ages, and with them pursue its goals and purposes eternally. Christ, who showed by example what it meant to keep the covenant and whose obedience retrieved it and made it a viable vehicle of divine intercourse with man, has pioneered the way that all men can follow. He is the first-fruits not only of them who sleep but of them who will in the day of His glory share with Him the joy of covenant-keeping, the joy of reigning forever and ever as the agents of the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.

If God is immutable; if the covenant of Gen 1:26-28 is inviolable, unconditional, and eternal; if Christ as Second Adam has showed His earthly life and ministry what it meant to keep the covenant perfectly—all of which is true—then we should expect some biblical statement about the fulfillment of the Adamic covenant by redeemed man. But before such an investigation is undertaken some consideration of the biblical view of time must be made.

Biblical View of Time

Basically, there are two ways in which time can be understood—the linear and the cyclical.28 The former sees time plotted on a non-
ending straight line with only accidental or coincidental repetitions of events and these only of an insignificant nature. The latter, however, interprets time as occurring in series of repeatable, nearly identical events. It is measured in terms of aeons which, though lasting for thousands of years, have decisive -and dramatic beginnings and endings. Time in the linear sense, an understanding that originated in the 17th century, views history as a continuously ongoing process with little or no theological significance. The religions and philosophies of the ancient world, particularly those of the Graeco-Mesopotamians, conceived of history as a cyclical phenomenon. Worlds and men are created to live, interact, and die, only to be recreated time and time again. Reincarnation is only one feature of such a world view.

Biblical notions of time are not properly either linear or cyclical, but a combination to be described, perhaps, as a "loop." Eternity is linear while the parenthesis that we call time, a sort of interruption of eternity, is cyclical in nature, though only unicyclical. God, eternally existent, created all things to serve his own interests. His creation, however, through its disobedience, has temporarily intersected the continuum of eternity, but through Christ the promise of a resumption of the linear has been made. When history has run its course, the Kingdom of God will be established, the cycle now having swung full turn. In one sense, time will have been blotted out, and the linear aspect of the divine historical process will appear as never having been broken at all. Or, to put it another way, the establishment of a new heavens and a new earth will be nothing more or less than a reconstitution of the pristine heavens and earth known by sinless Adam. Because human history since the fall has been characterized by sin, and since sin will be eradicated completely from the universe: it follows that the cycle of human history between the fall of First Adam and the advent of Second Adam is to be as a bubble on a string--when the bubble is pricked, the string alone remains.

Redeemed Mankind and the Age to Come

In order to visualize what qualities will be characteristic of man in the Age to Come, we need only refer to the Paradise setting of the original covenant of Genesis once again. Man will be in the unimpaired image of God and will exercise lordship, under God, of all the universe. Specifically, however, it is instructive to search out the eschatological teaching of the prophets, for there they detail man-to-man, man-to-nature, and man-to-God relationships that are only suggested in Genesis. There will be no war (Isa 2:4; MIC 4:3; Joel 3:10),

29 Ibid., 145-46.
30 Ibid., 136-30.
but justice and righteousness will prevail (Isa 9:7). The "natural" animosities between animals and between men and animals (which, after all, are not natural) will end (Isa 11:6-9; 65:25; Ezek 34:25; Hos 2:18). There will be no death or sorrow (Isa 25:8) and even the desert lands will come alive and produce abundance (Isa 35:1-2; Joel 3:18). Man will then rule with God and for God over all things (Dan 7:27; Rom 5:17; 1 Cor 6:2; 2 Tim 2:2; Rev 2:26-27; 3:21; 20:4). In Paul's great exposition of the truth concerning human redemption in Romans 8, he goes on to speak of the redemption of the creation as a whole. He suggests that "the creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed" (8:19, NIV). This revealing is certainly to be understood as the full, final restitution of the elect to their position as partners with God in the covenant plan (cf. 1 Pet 1:7,13).

The Apostle continues by showing how that all creation was "subjected to frustration" or made to partake of the divine curse because of man's sin (cf. Isa 24:6; Jer 12:4). There is hope, however, for nature, a hope that will be realized following the completion of the redemption of man. The corruption of the earth (suggested by the thorns and thistles of Gen 3:18) will be undone and nature will be set free from its bondage (cf. Acts 3:21). In the meantime, Paul says, "the whole creation has been groaning as in pains of childbirth." (Rom 8:22). This Image suggests that from the old will come something new. The cursed universe will give birth to a new one, a birth associated with the rebirth of the redeemed ones in their glorified state. Can it be that the violence and upheavals associated with the last days of this era, those signs of the end of the world, are at the same time the birth throes of nature which agonizes to deliver a new heaven and earth worthy of the King and his subjects who reign with him (cf. 2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 21:1)?

We would not suggest, of course, that the new heavens and new earth will be identical to those described in Genesis. There are many factors which would necessitate differences. For example, Adam lived in a garden, a life of pastoral, agricultural pursuits. The citizens of the New Earth will live both in this kind of environment and also in a great city, New Jerusalem, come down from God out of heaven. We are led to speculate, however, as to whether or not such might have been the case in the original Paradise as well if sufficient time had elapsed for a population large enough to be conducive to urban life had emerged. For Adam and Eve to have lived by themselves in a city as extensive as that described in Revelation would be little short

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of absurd (cf. Rev 21:16), And yet it is important to note that the Tree of Life, central to the Garden of Eden, is also a major feature of New Jerusalem (Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14, 19). The externals of the setting are different, but the underlying and essential content is the same.

Also, there is no sun or moon in the world to come, for the Lamb is the light thereof (Rev 21:23). Let us remember here also that there was sunless light on the earth before man was created (Gen 1:3), and that the function of the heavenly lightholders was not only to give light on the earth, but to serve as time indicators (Gen 1:14-18). They may have been prepared for this latter function in anticipation of the "interruption" of time mentioned previously, a kind of proleptic indicator that day and night, summer and winter, are testimonies to the continually alternating pattern of life in time, life as lived by fallen man. As we see later, part of the Noahic Covenant is the promise by the Lord that day and night shall not cease "as long as the earth endures" (Gen 8:22). Is it too much to propose that the sun would have become unnecessary and therefore nonexistent even in Eden had man successfully passed the probation of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? The absence of a sea in the renewed earth might also be explained on this basis. Perhaps it had been reserved by the Lord as a means of judgment and not as a necessary part of the creation (cf. 2 Pet 3:5-7). 32

A third contact is that of God's dwelling among men. Rev 21:3 states explicitly that the tabernacle of God will be among men and "he will live with them. . . . But Genesis also describes man's fellowship with God in terms that suggest that he was among them in a unique way, a way not paralleled after man's exile from the Garden (Gen 3:8-10).

Finally, John the Apostle visualizes the fact that there will be no curse in Heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 22:3), a decided contrast to the curse of Genesis 3, but nonetheless a reminder that the resumption of the covenant relationship will hark back to the perfect, uncursed state of affairs that formed the backdrop of the original declaration of the

III. Conclusion

The proposition that covenant is a dominant theme of the Bible has, we trust, been at least partially demonstrated by this brief look at

32 For the sea as a symbol of chaos out of which came (comes) the created order see B. K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos (Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974) 13-15.
early Genesis. It is much more than mere coincidence that Genesis and Revelation, the first and last books of Scripture, should share in common the idea of man in contractual relationship with God, the OT book rehearsing the covenant command to rule over all things, and the NT prophetically revealing that man shall indeed fulfill that covenant requirement perfectly and eternally.33 Everything in between—from Genesis 4 through Revelation 20—speaks of sin and redemption the violation of the covenant by First Adam and its obedience and fulfillment by Second Adam. By the grace of God we may now exult with David who exclaimed:

What is man that you are mindful of him,  
The son of man, that you care for him?  
You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
And crowned him with glory and honor?  
You made him ruler over the works of your hands;  
You put everything under his feet. . . .  
(Ps 8:4-6, NIV)


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THE ANCIENT EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 6:2, 4

ROBERT C. NEWMAN

The exegesis of Gen 6:2, 4 in ancient times is surveyed among extant sources, both Jewish and Christian. These interpretations are categorized as either "supernatural" or "nonsupernatural" depending upon the identification of the "sons of God." It is observed that the interpretation of "sons of God" as angels and "Nephilim" as giants dominates. This interpretation also seems to be that of the NT: almost certainly in Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2:4, and probably in 1 Cor 11:10 and Matt 22:30. Some suggestions regarding the source of this interpretation and its validity are made.

*    *    *

Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with men forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." The Nephilim were on earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown (Gen 6:1-4 NASB).

This passage has been a center of controversy for at least two millennia. The present form of the dispute is rather paradoxical. On the one hand, liberal theologians, who deny the miraculous, claim the account pictures a supernatural liason between divine beings and humans.1 Conservative theologians, though believing implicitly in angels and demons, tend to deny the passage any such import.2 The

2E.g., G. Ch. Aalders, Genesis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981); H. G. Stigers, A Commentary on Genesis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); J. Murray, Principles of Conduct (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 243-49.
liberal position is more understandable with the realization that they deny the historicity of the incident and see it as a borrowing from pagan mythology. The rationale behind the conservative view is more complex: though partially a reaction to liberalism, the view is older than liberal theology. Moreover, the conservative camp is not unanimous in this interpretation; several expositors see supernatural liaisons here, but ones which really occurred.3

The concern in this article, however, is not to trace the history of interpretation of this passage, nor (basically) to discuss modern arguments for and against various views. Rather, the concern is to see how it was understood in antiquity and (if possible) why it was so understood.

Gen 6:1-4 seems to be something of an "erratic boulder" for all interpreters, standing apart to some extent from its context. The preceding chapter consists of a 32-verse genealogy extending from Adam through his son Seth to Noah and his sons. God is mentioned in three connections only: he creates man (5:1), walks with Enoch (5:22, 24) and curses the ground (5:29). If we include the last two verses of chapter 4, we pick up two more references: Seth is God's replacement for Abel (4:25); and men begin to call upon the LORD at the time of Enosh (4:26). Following our passage, the context leads quickly into the flood, beginning with God's observation that both man and beast must be wiped out because man's wickedness has become very great.

From the passage and its context a number of questions arise. Who are the "sons of God" mention in 6:2, 4? The phrase occurs nowhere else in the context or even in Genesis. Who are the "daughters of men"? This phrase at least seems to be related to v 1, where "men" have "daughters" born to them. Why does the text say "sons of God" and "daughters of men" rather than "sons of men" and "daughters of God"? How is God's reaction in vv 3 and 5 related to all this? Are these marriages the last straw in a series of sins leading to the flood or not? Who are the "Nephilim" in v 4? Are they the offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men or not? Are they the "mighty men" mentioned in the same verse? Is it their sin which brings on the flood?

The scope of this article does not permit an investigation of all these matters. We shall concentrate on two: the phrase בנים אלהים, usually translated "sons of God" (vv 2, 4) and the word נפלים, here transliterated "Nephilim" (v 4). Though other matters are of interest

and will influence one's interpretation, these two seem to constitute an interpretive watershed.

For ease of discussion we shall divide the various interpretive schemes into two broad categories which we label "supernatural" and "nonsupernatural" (this rather clumsy term being used to avoid the connotation of "proper" which "natural" would give). The supernatural category will include any views in which the sons of God are not human, and the nonsupernatural those in which they are human. Within each category we shall proceed more or less chronologically from the earliest extant examples to late antiquity, giving greater attention to earlier materials. The NT will be omitted from this preliminary survey, but we shall return to it later to see if it favors one of these interpretations. Thereafter we shall examine possible exegetical bases for the various views and seek to draw some conclusions regarding not only what was done in antiquity but how we should interpret the passage. We hope also to provide some general methodological suggestions.

THE SUPERNATURAL INTERPRETATION

Among extant materials interpreting Gen 6:2, 4, the supernatural view is older, though we cannot be sure in which work it appears first, the LXX or I Enoch.

LXX

The Old Greek version of the Pentateuch, traditionally known as the LXX, was probably produced in the middle of the 3rd century B.C. 4 Extant MSS of Genesis render בֵּינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים variously as γενεαὶ τοῦ θεοῦ and γενεαὶ τοῦ θεοῦ. 5 The latter alternative clearly moves the


5 See the relevant textual footnotes in A. Rahlfs, Septuaginta (7th ed.; Stuttgart: Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1962) 8, and especially in J. W. Wevers, Genesis (Gottingen LXX: Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974) 108. The variant γενεαὶ is the minority reading among extant MSS and versions, but it is supported by many witnesses, including Codex Alexandrinus (4th century A.D.), as well as Philo and Josephus, both writing in the 1st century A.D. though extant only in much later MSS. These latter comment on the passage in such a way that their reading cannot be dismissed as a scribal error from later Christian copyists. γενεαὶ is the majority reading, for which the most important witnesses are papyrus 911 (3rd century A.D.) and Codex Coislinianus (7th century). The Gottingen LXX favors the latter reading since it is supported by all the MS groups, though none are as early as Philo and Josephus. Yet the influence of the MT on the transmission of the LXX might well explain γενεαὶ, even if γενεαὶ were the original translation. It is therefore impossible to be certain whether γενεαὶ was the original translation or an early midrashic corruption.
text in a supernatural direction, even though διαγως sometimes means a human messenger (e.g., Gen 32:3, 6). This variant is already cited and discussed by Philo, so apparently predates the 1st century A.D. In Gen 6:4 ימי היא is translated γιαντες; without textual variation. The Greek word, usually rendered "giant," indicates a warrior of large stature and translates רTestData in Gen 10:8, 9.

I Enoch

Possibly older than the LXX is the book of Enoch, an apocalyptic work of great diversity organized around revelations allegedly given to the patriarch of this name. The particular material we are concerned with is thought to be pre-Maccabean by Charles and from the early 2nd century B.C. by Eissfeldt. In any case, fragments from this part of Enoch have been found at Qumran in a style of handwriting that dates to the pre-Christian era.

The first five chaps. of Enoch present a mostly poetic picture of the coming of God to earth in judgment and what this will mean for the wicked and the righteous. Chap. 6 begins:

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied, in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' (1 Enoch 6:1-2)

The account goes on (chaps. 6-8) to tell how two hundred angels came down on Mt. Hermon, led by their chief Semjaza, took wives, taught them science, magic and technology, and begot by them giants over a mile high! Along with Semjaza, principal attention is given to the angel Azazel, who taught mankind metallurgy for weapons and jewelry.

The good angels report these things to God (chap. 9), who sends Uriel to warn Noah of the coming flood, Gabriel to destroy the giants, Raphael to take charge of Azazel, and Michael to deal with

Semjaza and his fellows. The instructions given to Raphael and Michael are of particular interest:

Bind Azazel hand and foot, and cast him into darkness: and make an opening in the desert, which is in Dudael, and cast him therein. And place upon him rough and jagged rocks, and cover him with darkness, and let him abide there for ever, and cover his face that he may not see light. And on the great day of judgment he shall be cast into the fire. (1 Enoch 10:4-6)

Go, bind Semjaza and his associates who have united themselves with women so as to have defiled themselves with them in all their uncleanness. And when their sons [the giants] have slain one another, and they have seen the destruction of their beloved ones, bind them fast for seventy generations in the valleys of the earth, till the day of their judgment and of the consummation, till the judgment that is for ever and ever is consummated. (1 Enoch 10:11-12)

Thus Enoch presents an interpretation of Gen 6 in terms of angelic cohabitation with women, resulting in gigantic offspring. The angels who sinned are bound to await the final judgment.

Jubilees

The Book of Jubilees [Jub.] is an expanded retelling of Genesis and part of Exodus. It provides an elaborate chronology based on sabbatical cycles and jubilees, plus a theory that the patriarchs observed various Mosaic regulations even before they were given at Sinai. Charles and Tedesche date the book in the last half of the 2nd century B.C., while Eissfeldt puts it about 100 B.C. More recently VanderKam has presented detailed arguments for a somewhat earlier date, around 150 B.C.⁹

Though apparently dependent on 1 Enoch or one of its sources, Jub. differs from Enoch on the reason for the angels' descent to earth:

...and he called his name Jared; for in his days the angels of the Lord descended on the earth, those who are named the Watchers, that they should instruct the children of men, and that they should do judgment and uprightness on the earth. (Jub. 4:15)

Chap. 5 follows with an expansion of Gen 6, in which these Watchers cohabit with women and the offspring produced are giants. The sinning angels are not named, but God's response to their sin is described:

And against the angels whom He had sent upon the earth, He was exceedingly wroth, and He gave command to root them out of all their dominion, and He made us [one of the good angels is speaking] to bind them in the depths of the earth, and behold they are bound in the midst of them and are (kept) separate. (Jub. 5:6)

Other Pseudepigrapha

The other works included in Jewish pseudepigrapha which refer to this view are late. Both 2 Enoch 18 and 2 Baruch [Bar] 56 mention the angels of Gen 6 as being punished by torment, the former indicating that they are under earth, the latter as being in chains.

The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs [T. 12 Patr.] make reference to this view more than once, but the date and nature of these works are problematical since they are Christian in their present form. Whether the Testaments are basically pre-Christian with some later editing, or basically Christian using some older Jewish materials, is still hotly debated.10 In any case T. Reub. 5:5-7 presents an unusual variant of the supernatural view: the actual cohabitation is between humans, but the spiritual influence of the angels produces giants:

Flee, therefore, fornication, my children, and command your wives and your daughters, that they adorn not their heads and faces to deceive the mind: because every woman who uses these wiles hath been reserved for eternal punishment. For thus they allured the Watchers who were before the flood; for as these continually beheld them, they lusted after them, and they conceived the act in their mind; for they changed themselves into the shape of men, and appeared to them when they were with their husbands. And the women lusting in their minds after their forms, gave birth to giants, for the Watchers appeared to them as reaching even unto heaven.

T. Naph. 3:3-5 gives a supernatural interpretation of Gen 6: 1-4 in a grouping of examples which parallels those in Jude and 2 Pet:

The Gentiles went astray, and forsook the Lord, and changed their order, and obeyed stocks and stones, spirits of deceit. But ye shall not be so, my children, recognizing in the firmament, in the earth, and in the sea, and in all created things, the Lord who made all things, that ye become not as Sodom, which changed the order of nature. In like manner the Watchers also changed the order of their nature, whom the Lord cursed at the flood, on whose account he made the earth without inhabitants and fruitless.

Among the materials found in caves near the Dead Sea, both the Genesis Apocryphon [IQapGen] and the Damascus Document [CD] refer to the supernatural interpretation. The former is a retelling of Genesis in popular style, extant only in one fragmented MS, which has been dated paleographically to the late 1st century B.C. or early 1st century A.D.\(^\text{11}\) On the basis of a detailed comparison of contents with 1 Enoch and Jub., Vermes believes that apGen is older and a source for both, "the most ancient midrash of all." Fitzmyer disagrees, dating apGen in the same era as the extant MS.\(^\text{12}\) Certainly it is no later than the Roman destruction of Qumran about A.D. 68. In what little remains of the scroll's col. 2, Lamech is fearful that his wife's pregnancy (her child will be Noah) is due to "the Watchers and the Holy Ones," but she stoutly denies it.

The CD is a sort of covenant-renewal document: the history of the community (presumably Qumran) is sketched, and its members are exhorted to covenant faithfulness. Cross and Vermes date the work to about 100 B.C.\(^\text{13}\) Speaking of the "guilty inclination" and "eyes of lust," the author says:

> For through them, great men have gone astray and mighty heroes have stumbled from former times until now. Because they walked in the stubbornness of their heart the Heavenly Watchers fell; they were caught because they did not keep the commandments of God. And their sons also fell who were tall as cedar trees and whose bodies were like mountains. (CD 2:16-19)

In his treatise On the Giants, the Alexandrian Jewish philosopher Philo (20 B.C.-A.D. 50)\(^\text{14}\) quotes the Old Greek version of this passage with the readings ἀγγέλοι του θεοῦ and γίγαντες. Unfortunately Philo is not always a clear writer. Apparently he takes the literal meaning of the verses to refer to angels and women since, immediately after quoting Gen 6:2, he says:

> It is Moses' custom to give the name of angels to those whom other


\(^\text{14}\)All dates are approximate throughout.
philosophers call demons [or spirits], souls that is which fly and hover in the air. And let no one suppose that what is here said is a myth.\textsuperscript{15}

After a lengthy discussion arguing for the existence of non-corporeal spirits, however, Philo proceeds to allegorize the passage:

So, then, it is no myth at all of giants that he [Moses] sets before us; rather he wishes to show you that some men are earth-born, some heaven-born, and some God-born.\textsuperscript{16}

Roughly speaking, these three categories Philo enumerates correspond to people primarily concerned about the physical, the intellectual and the mystical, respectively. Philo's sympathies definitely lie with the second and third. He has no interest in stories about physical mating, and is probably best understood as rejecting the literal meaning of this passage.\textsuperscript{17} If so, we have in Philo a literal exegesis which gives the supernatural interpretation and an allegorical exegesis which provides a very unusual sort of nonsupernatural view.

\textit{Josephus}

From late in the 1st century A.D. comes the \textit{Jewish Antiquities} of Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37-100). The first eleven books of the \textit{Antiquities} retell the biblical history with various elaborations based on Jewish traditions. In book one, just before recounting the flood, Josephus says:

For many angels of God now consorted with women and begat sons who were overbearing and disdainful of every virtue, such confidence had they in their strength; in fact, the deeds that tradition ascribes to them resemble the audacious exploits told by the Greeks of the giants.\textsuperscript{18}

In addition to this clearly supernatural interpretation, Franxman sees evidence for a nonsupernatural interpretation involving Sethite-Cainite intermarriage: in the immediately preceding sentences of Josephus, we are told that the Sethites continue virtuous for seven generations and then turn away from God and become zealous for wickedness, a feature of later Sethite-Cainite views.\textsuperscript{19} Yet nothing about intermarriage of Sethites and Cainites appears in the extant

\textsuperscript{15}Philo, \textit{Giants} 6-7.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{18}Josephus, \textit{Antiquities} 1.73.
\textsuperscript{19}T. W. Franxman, \textit{Genesis and the 'Jewish Antiquities' of Flavius Josephus} (BibOr 35; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1979) 80-81.
copies of Josephus, so Franxman must postulate this in a non-extant source he used.

**Targum Pseudo-Jonathan**

It is difficult to know where to place the targumim. These Aramaic translations of Scripture (often paraphrases or even commentaries) have an oral background in the synagogue services of pre-Christian times, but their extant written forms seem to be much later. Among these, the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* [Tg. Ps.-J.] presents at least a partially supernatural interpretation. Although in its extant form this targum is later than the rise of Islam in the 7th century A.D., early materials also appear in it. In view of the rabbinic reactions to the supernatural view by the 2nd century A.D. (see below), our passage is probably one of its early parts:

And it came to pass when the sons of men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and beautiful daughters were born to them, that the sons of the great ones saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, with eyes painted and hair curled, walking in nakedness of flesh, and they conceived lustful thoughts; and they took them wives of all they chose... Shamhazai and Azael fell from heaven and were on earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of the great ones came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same are called men of the world, the men of renown. (*Tg. Ps.-J.* 6:1-2,4)

Here the phrase "sons of the great ones" may reflect a nonsupernatural interpretation, but the reference to Shamhazai and Azael falling from heaven certainly does not. The names given are close to those in 1 Enoch, considering that the latter has gone through two translations to reach its extant Ethiopic version. Notice also that the Nephilim are here identified with the angels rather than their offspring as in Enoch, Jub., and Josephus.

As we shall see below, the supernatural interpretation was eventually superceded in Jewish circles by a nonsupernatural one, probably in the century following the fall of Jerusalem. Yet remnants of the former can still be seen in later rabbinic literature.

**Early Christian References**

Passing over the NT for the time being, we find abundant early evidence for the supernatural interpretation in Christian circles. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-160) says, in his *Second Apology*:

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God, when He had made the whole world, and subjected things earthly to man, . . . committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom He appointed over them. But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons.\textsuperscript{22}

Justin goes on to tell how the human race was subdued to the angels by being introduced to magic, fear, false worship and lust, and how they were trained in all sorts of wickedness. Justin accepts the pagan mythologies as having some historical veracity, describing the acts of these angels and demons rather than the gods.

Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-215) alludes to the supernatural interpretation in his \textit{Miscellanies}: "... the angels who had obtained the superior rank, having sunk into pleasures, told to the women the secrets which had come to their knowledge. . . ."\textsuperscript{23}

Tertullian (A.D. 160-220) speaks of the incident several times. In \textit{On Idolatry} 9, he says that "those angels, the deserters from God, the lovers of women," revealed astrology to mankind. In his work \textit{Against Marcion} 5.18 he argues that Paul's reference to "spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies" (Eph 6:12) does not refer to Marcion's wicked creator-god, but to the time "when angels were entrapped into sin by the daughters of men." And in his treatise \textit{On the Veiling of Virgins} 7, he argues that Paul's reference to veiling "because of the angels" (I Cor 11:10) refers to this incident.

Lactantius (A.D. 240-320), in his \textit{Divine Institutes} 2.15, teaches that God sent the angels to earth to teach mankind and protect them from Satan, but that Satan "enticed them to vices, and polluted them by intercourse with women." This is closer to \textit{Jub.} than \textit{Enoch}. The sinning angels, Lactantius continues, could not return to heaven, so they became demons of the air. Their half-breed offspring could not enter hell (hades?), so they became demons of the earth. All of this Lactantius connects with pagan mythology and the occult.

Similar materials are found in the \textit{Clementine Homilies} 8.11-15 and the \textit{Instructions} of Commodianus (chap. 3), neither of which is likely to predate the 3rd century.\textsuperscript{24} The \textit{Homilies} add the unusual idea that the angels had first transformed themselves into jewels and animals to convict mankind of covetousness. Perhaps this was derived from some of the stories about Zeus, as the writer says: "These things also the poets among yourselves, by reason of fearlessness, sing, as they befell, attributing to one the many and diverse doings of all" (8:12).

\textsuperscript{22} Justin, \textit{Apology} 2.5.
\textsuperscript{23} Clement, \textit{Miscellanies} 5.1.10.
THE NONSUPERNATURAL INTERPRETATION

The earliest extant examples of the nonsupernatural interpretations of Gen 6:2, 4 come from the 1st century A.D. and thus are later than the earliest specimens of the supernatural interpretation. Since all come centuries after Genesis was written, it is not possible to be sure which is the oldest.

First Century Sources

As mentioned previously, Philo prefers an allegorical interpretation of Gen 6:1-4 in which God-oriented persons (sons of God) may fall and become earth-centered (beget giants, the "earth-born") by consorting with vice and passion (daughters of men).

The Biblical Antiquities of Pseudo-Philo is another work which retells biblical history, in this case from Adam to Saul. By an unknown writer, it was attributed to Philo because it circulated with his genuine works. It is usually dated shortly before or after the fall of Jerusalem.25 Chap. 3 begins:

And it came to pass when men had begun to multiply on the earth, that beautiful daughters were born unto them. And the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were exceeding fair, and took them wives of all that they had chosen. And God said: My spirit shall not judge among all these men forever, because they are of flesh; but their years shall be 120. (Bib. Ant. 3:1-2)

On the surface this does not appear to be an interpretation at all, and perhaps it is not. The writer does not mention the Nephilim, but this may be merely a case of epitomizing. Yet the rendering of the biblical נָדִיב (Gen 6:3) by "judge" at least foreshadows Targum Neofiti, to be discussed below. Likewise the rabbinical exegesis of Gen 6:2--"they took wives of all they chose"--is anticipated in an earlier remark of Pseudo-Philo: "And at that time, when they had begun to do evil, everyone with his neighbor's wife, defiling them, God was angry" (2:8).

Second Century Sources

Three translations of the OT into Greek were made in the 2nd century A.D.: one by Aquila, a student of R. Akiba, about A.D. 130;26 another by Symmachus, said to be an Ebionite, late in the century;27

and a third by Theodotion, of whom little is known. Theodotion reads \( \text{oioi to\ θeou} \) and \( \gamma\iota\alpha\alpha\upsilon\tau\varepsilon\varsigma \) like many MSS of the LXX, adding nothing new and not clearly either supernatural or nonsupernatural. Aquila has \( \text{oioi των θεων} \), which looks more like an attempt to avoid the problem of the one true God having sons than it does a preference for either of the interpretations we are considering. Symmachus has \( \text{eioi των δυναστεύοντων} \), meaning either "sons of the powerful" or "sons of the rulers," rather like the targumic views to be discussed below and that of Meredith Kline. For the Nephilim, Aquila has \( \epsilon\iota\pi\pi\iota\tau\omicron\nu\varepsilon\varsigma \), meaning "those who fall upon," which might be either supernatural "those who fall upon (earth)" or nonsupernatural "those who attack." Symmachus has \( \beta\iota\alpha\omicron\omicron\omicron \), "violent ones." Both the second translation of Aquila's rendering and that of Symmachus fit Gen 6:11 -- "the earth was filled with violence."

The Targumim

*Targum Neofiti* [Targ. Neof] is the only complete extant MS of the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch. The MS is from the 16th century, but its text has been variously dated from the 1st to the 4th centuries A.D. In place of the Hebrew \( \text{בנין הפגי} \) is the Aramaic \( \text{בנין שופי} \), "sons of the judges," using a cognate noun to the verb \( \text{עץ} \) appearing in the MT of Gen 6:3. Nephilim is rendered by \( \text{בבך עטב} \), "warriors." The text of the targum seems to reflect a nonsupernatural interpretation, unless we press the last sentence of 6:4--"these are the warriors that (were there) from the beginning of the world, warriors of wondrous renown"--so as to exclude human beings. However, the MS has many marginal notes, which presumably represent one or more other MSS of the Palestinian Targum. One such note occurs at 6:4 and reads: "There were warriors dwelling on earth in those days, and also afterwards, after the sons of the angels had joined (in wedlock) the daughters of the sons." Thus the text of *Targ. Neof* seems to be nonsupernatural while a marginal note is clearly supernatural.

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28 See the lower set of footnotes in the Gottingen LXX for the readings of these other Greek versions.
32 S. Lund and J. Foster, *Variant Versions of Targumic Traditions Within Codex Neofiti* 1 (SBLASP 2; Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1977) 12, 14; our passage and marginal note are not discussed.
33 Diez Macho, *Neophyti* 511.
The *Targum of Onqelos* [Tg. Onq.] became the official targum to the Pentateuch for Judaism. According to the Babylonian Talmud *[Bab. Talm.]* (Meg. 3a) it was composed early in the 2nd century A.D., but this seems to be a confusion with the Greek translation of Aquila. Although the relations between the various targumim are complicated by mutual influence in transmission, *Onq.* was probably completed before A.D. 400 in Babylonia using Palestinian materials as a basis. In our passage *Onq.* reads פֶּתַרְנֵי הַמֶּרֶן, "sons of the great ones," probably referring to rulers. For Nephilim it has פֶּתַרְנֵי. Etheridge's translation "giants" for this is possible, but not necessary, as Aberbach and Grossfeld prefer "mighty ones."36

**Christian Interpretations**

Meanwhile, the nonsupernatural interpretation begins to show up in Christian circles. Julius Africanus (A.D. 160-240) wrote a *History of the World* which has survived only in fragments quoted by later authors. In one of these Julius says:

> When men multiplied on earth, the angels of heaven came together with the daughters of men. In some copies I found "sons of God." What is meant by the Spirit in my opinion, is that the descendants of Seth are called the sons of God on account of the righteous men and patriarchs who have sprung from him, even down to the Saviour Himself; but that the descendants of Cain are named the seed of man, as having nothing divine in them. . . .37

There is no context to work with here, but it sounds as though Julius has derived this view on his own.

Augustine (A.D. 354-430) discusses Gen 6:1-4 in his *City of God*. His basic approach is seen in 15.22:

> It was the order of this love, then, this charity or attachment, which the sons of God disturbed when they forsook God and were enamored of the daughters of men. And by these two names (sons of God and daughters of men) the two cities [city of God and city of man] are sufficiently distinguished. For though the former were by nature children of men, they had come into possession of another name by grace.

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34Bowker, *Targums* 22-26; McNamara, *Targum and Testament* 173-76.
Augustine goes on (15.23) to admit that angels do appear in bodies, and that stories were at this time being told of women being assaulted by sylvans and fauns, but he says "I could by no means believe that God's holy angels could at that time have so fallen." He interprets 2 Pet 2:4 as referring to the primeval fall of Satan. The word "angel," he points out, can with scriptural warrant be applied to men. Besides, the giants were already on earth when these things happened, and so not the offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men. Also the giants need not be of enormous stature but only so large as sometimes seen today. God's response in Gen 6:3 is directed against men, so that is what the "angels" were. He dismisses with contempt "the fables of those scriptures which are called apocryphal."

**Rabbinic Literature**

The Mishnah is a concise topical summary of the oral rabbinic legal traditions written about A.D. 200. It contains no reference to Gen 6:1-4 to the best of my knowledge, but this is not surprising in view of the preponderance of halakah rather than haggadah.

The Midrash Rabbah [Midr. Rab.] is a collection of interpretive comments on the Pentateuch and the five Megillot (Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations). The earliest of these is Genesis Rabbah [Gen. Rab.], which Strack puts "not much later than the Palestinian Talmud" (ca. A.D. 400) and Epstein sees as mainly from the 3rd century A.D. We have an extended discussion of our passage in Gen. Rab. 26.5-7. R. Simeon b. Yohai (A.D. 130-160) is quoted as identifying the "sons of God" as "sons of nobles" and as cursing all who call them "sons of God." The reason for their title "sons of God" is their long lifespans. To explain why marrying women would be such a sin as the context indicates, R. Judan (A.D. 325) explains that נבוי, "beautiful" (Gen 6:2), should be taken as a singular adjective: the noblemen enjoyed the bride before the bridegroom could. The phrase "they were beautiful" meant they took virgins; "they took wives for themselves" meant they took married women; "whomever they chose" meant they indulged in homosexuality and bestiality. Regarding the interpretation of "Nephilim," the rabbis apparently used Num 13:33, where the term is associated with the Anakim at the time of the Exodus. With this hint and the aid of Deut 2:10-11, 20-21, they obtained five other names for the Nephilim by which to describe them using etymological word-play. Two of these are rather supernatural sounding: "Gibborim: . . . the marrow of each one's thigh bone was eighteen cubits long"; "Anakim: . . . their necks

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reached the globe of the sun." The term "Nephilim" is understood as teaching that "they hurled (הפל) the world down, themselves fell (גפלו) from the world, and filled the world with abortions (הפלים) through their immorality."

A few scattered references occur in the Babylonian Talmud, a compilation of the Mishnah and its commentary finished in the 6th century A.D. A relatively clear allusion to the nonsupernatural view occurs in Sanh. 108a, in a context of the corruption of the generation at the time of the flood. R. Jose (A.D. 130-160) is quoted:

They waxed haughty only on account of covetousness of the eyeball, which is like water, as it is written, And they took wives from all they chose. Therefore he punished them by water, which is like the eyeball, as it is written, All the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

There is a word-play here on יָנָק, which can mean either "fountain" or "eye." The main point, however, is that the punishment was designed to fit the crime. Thus those who died in the flood are understood to be those who took the wives. If the attribution to R. Jose here is trustworthy, then this view was in circulation by the middle of the 2nd century A.D., in agreement with the testimony of Symmachus and Gen. Rab.

Elsewhere in the Talmud there are scattered remnants of the supernatural view. Yoma 67b refers to the scapegoat being called Azazel because it atones for the "affair of Uza and Aza'el," probably a reference to the Shamhazai and Azael of 1 Enoch and Tg. PS.-J. Nid. 61a speaks of an Ahijah, son of Shamhazai.

NT INTERPRETATION

The supernatural interpretation clearly existed before NT times, as did Philo's peculiar nonsupernatural view. Whether or not the later rabbinic view (that the sons of God were judges or noblemen) or the later Christian view (that the sons of God were Sethites) existed at this time, we cannot say, but there is no positive evidence for them.

What does the NT have to say? Does it refer to Gen 6:2, 4 at all? If so, how does it interpret the passage? First, unlike hundreds of other OT passages, the NT nowhere explicitly quotes this passage. Any NT reference will therefore have to be merely an allusion. What will count as an allusion? Proponents of a nonsupernatural view will be at something of a disadvantage: references to the wickedness of men at the flood are not decisive in favor of the nonsupernatural

39L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews (Philadelphia: JPS, 1937),5, 152, explains how "Shamhazai" may be derived from "Uza,"

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view, but references to wicked angels will have to be assigned to some other event if this view is to stand.

2 Pet 2:4
For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment . . .

Is this a reference to Gen 6 or to the primeval fall of Satan before Eden as proposed by Augustine? This example precedes a reference to the flood and to Sodom and Gomorrah, so the order would be chronological in either case. It is given as an example of judgment to the readers of the epistle, and examples, when not explained, can be presumed well-known to the original readers. The other two examples are both well-known because they occur in Scripture. The primeval fall, however, would be almost totally inference, whereas the supernatural view would see this as a popular understanding of Scripture at the time. Certainly some measure of popularity is to be inferred from its occurrence in the pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo and Josephus.

The word "pits" (σιροίς) is a variant; some MSS read σιροίς, "chains." Either word would fit the description of the angels' punishment in 1 Enoch and Jub., but this must be a new revelation (which happens to match an old view of Gen 6!) on the nonsupernatural view. Similarly for the details about "darkness" and the angels' being "reserved for judgment." The verb translated "cast into hell" is ταρ-ταρώω, derived from Tartarus, "a subterranean place lower than Hades where divine punishment was meted out.

This passage seems strongly to support the supernatural interpretation of Gen 6, even though it raises problems regarding the extra detail it shares with Enoch and Jub. not found in Genesis. We will address this question later.

Jude 6
And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

Jude 14-15 contains a quotation that appears almost word-for-word in 1 Enoch 1:9, so it is difficult to argue that Jude knew nothing of 1 Enoch 6. All the features of Jude 6 fit 1 Enoch better.

40BAGD, 805.
41With attestation in the Qumran fragments; see Milik, Books of Enoch, on 4QEn.
than they do *Jub.*, where the angels were on earth before sinning, and were even sent there by God. To explain Jude 6 of the primeval fall, one must see further new revelation here also, namely that this fall involved leaving their οἰκητήριον, "dwelling" or "abode." On the other hand, this is not necessary for the supernatural view, as the angels would at least have to come to earth to get their wives (Gen 6:2) and their offspring the Nephilim are explicitly said to be "on earth" (Gen 6:4).

In addition, Jude's next example (v 7) of Sodom and Gomorrah seems to refer back to this example when it says "they [Sodom and Gomorrah] in the same way as these [angels] indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh." One might seek to avoid this by reading "they [the cities around Sodom and Gomorrah] in the same way as these [Sodom and Gomorrah] indulged. . . ." But "these" is τούτων, which more naturally refers to the angels (masculine) than to Sodom and Gomorrah, as the latter have just been referred to in the same verse by the feminine pronoun αὐτάς. Likewise "gross immorality" and "strange flesh" are two points of real parallelism between the violent homosexuality of Sodom and the angel-human liaisons of the supernatural interpretation. It seems that Jude 6 strongly indicates a supernatural interpretation of Gen 6:1-4.

*1 Cor 11:10*

Therefore the woman ought to have (a symbol of) authority on her head, because of the angels.

This verse has puzzling elements for any interpreter because of its briefness and lack of explanation. So little is known about the activity of angels that one cannot rule out some obscure allusion to the presence of good angels at Christian worship who would be offended by unsubmitting women. Yet one can easily find more serious offenses for the angels to be upset about in the Corinthian worship services, e.g., misuse of tongues (chs. 12-14) and disorderly conduct at the Lord's Supper (11:17-34). Yet the supernatural interpretation of Gen 6 would supply an excellent reason why this phrase would occur in this context and the statement would become far less cryptic. Tertullian so understood the passage by A.D. 200. This context might also fit the context tangentially, with woman being made for man (v 9) perhaps suggesting she was not made for angels, and the veiling indicating she was under the authority of father or husband.

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I Pet 3:19-20

For Christ also died for sins. . . that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit, in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits (now) in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah. . . .

This, too, is a puzzling passage which bristles with uncertainties no matter how one interprets Gen 6: 1-4. Yet it seems clearly to point to spirits disobedient at the time of Noah. The word "spirit" may have been chosen by Peter to picture disembodied men (cf. Luke 8:55; Acts 7:59), but it could also refer to or include non-humans. If the passage concerns a "descent into hell," the supernatural interpretation might at least suggest a rationale for singling out those particular spirits associated with the time of Noah: the events of Gen 6:1-4 may have been an attempt to thwart or pre-empt the incarnation. By itself the passage hardly proves the NT favors the supernatural interpretation.

Matt 22:30

For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven.

This is probably the most common passage on which the supernatural interpretation is refuted.43 It is quite naturally understood to teach that angels cannot marry and therefore they never have. Likewise, the terminology recalls Gen 6:2, since "to take a wife to oneself" is a standard OT idiom for marriage. But perhaps the term "angels" is intentionally qualified by the phrase "in heaven." In the supernatural interpretation it was not the angels in heaven that took wives, but those who left heaven (cf. Jude 6: "abandoned their abode") and came to earth to do so. This would not be so obscure an allusion in NT times as it seems to us today if the supernatural interpretation were then common knowledge as the evidence indicates. The same phrase "in heaven" occurs in the parallel passage in Mark (12:25). It does not occur in Luke (20:36), but the context strongly implies good angels are in view.

Other NT Passages

No other passages strongly favor either interpretation. References to the abyss-as an unpleasant abode for demons (Luke 8:31), as a

prison for some sort of supernatural locusts (Rev 9:1-11), and as the source for the beast (Rev 11:7)--are consistent with either view, though somewhat parallel to the binding beneath the earth described in 1 Enoch and Jub. So is the reference to the binding of Satan in Rev 20. A Sethite-Cainite view of Gen 6:1-4 might serve as a basis for Paul's remarks about mixed marriages in I Cor 7:9, 15, but these could easily be generalized from OT regulations against intermarriage with Gentiles. In spite of the interpretation commonly given to Matt 22:30 and parallels, the evidence seems strong that the NT adopts a supernatural interpretation of Gen 6:1-4.

SOURCES OF THE INTERPRETATIONS

Here we move from the solid ground of extant sources to the thin ice of speculation. Since the authors rarely write anything directly about their sources or methods, we are left to inferences from what they do write. Patte summarizes the situation nicely for the Qumran commentators

At first one wonders what is the actual relationship between the biblical text quoted and its interpretation. The author is giving us the results of his use of Scripture without emphasizing the process itself.44

Studies in the NT and the intertestamental literature indicate that this situation is not confined to Qumran.

Several sources for these interpretations can be imagined: (1) pure invention; (2) borrowing from another source, whether an earlier writing, an oral tradition, or even pagan mythology; (3) extra-biblical revelation, whether divine or occult; and (4) influence from other OT passages thought to be relevant. This list is probably not exhaustive.

The first category is doubtless important: new ideas for the interpretation of a given passage will continue to arise until at least the simpler alternatives are exhausted. Borrowing from an earlier written or oral source may also be important. As long as these sources are interpretations of the passage at hand, this will merely serve to push the origin of the interpretation back into non-extant sources. Charles believes this is what happened for our passage in 1 Enoch, which he attributes to a non-extant Book of Noah.45 The idea that the Jews borrowed from pagan myth is popular among liberals. Where Jews believed that the event reported in a pagan myth really happened, they might have done so, though this is hard to imagine for the Pharisees or Essenes. Indeed, in some of these cases, the events reported may actually have happened!

Regarding extra-biblical revelation, Patte and Russell believe that some of the apocalyptic literature may be based on actual visions experienced by the author.\textsuperscript{46} Whether Patte accepts the miraculous or not is not altogether clear: he speaks of these visions as "psychical"\textsuperscript{47} yet also as being put together by "creative imagination" from materials in the author's memory.\textsuperscript{48} Frederic Gardiner favors earlier unrecorded divine revelation as a source for some of the materials in 2 Pet and Jude:

Particulars of their [fallen angels'] history may have been from time to time incidentally revealed which have not been mentioned in the volume of inspiration, but may nevertheless form a true basis for various traditions concerning them. This seems probable from the way in which both St. Peter and St. Jude speak of them, citing certain facts of the history, not elsewhere revealed, as well-known truths.\textsuperscript{49}

Neither should occult activity be ruled out in some Jewish sectarian circles at this period. Yet some of the interpretations which we see here may be based on other OT passages thought to be relevant to Gen 6:1-4. Both the NT and the Jewish literature throughout this period often weave together OT passages from various locations.\textsuperscript{50} This may even be the case when it is not so obvious:

\ldots in many cases where we cannot understand the reason for a targumic interpretation, one should resist the temptation to conclude that it is the product of the mere fancy of either the targumist or of the community\ldots. On the contrary, we should assume that in most instances the targumic interpretations are the result of an explanation of Scripture by means of Scripture.\textsuperscript{51}

This fourth category is the most easily investigated since the OT is extant.

Consider first the interpretation of בנים האלים, "sons of God."

The various interpretations are most easily seen as a combination of categories (1) and (4) above, working out the simple alternatives on the basis of Scriptural parallels. The phrase occurs in Job 1:6 and 2:2 in a heavenly context, and Satan is associated with them. Thus the

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., 183.
\textsuperscript{48}Ibid., 183.
\textsuperscript{49}F. Gardiner, The Last of the Epistles: A Commentary Upon the Epistle of St. Jude (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1856) 72.
\textsuperscript{50}See Patte, Hermeneutic 184, and throughout, on anthological style.
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., 67.
supernatural view "angels" arises easily. On the other hand, מָלַח is occasionally used of rulers and judges in the OT (e.g., Exod 22:8, 9), from which the Jewish nonsupernatural interpretation may be derived. It is possible that the targumic rendering "sons of the great ones" in Tg. Ps.-J and Tg. Onq. may have another origin--an etymological translation to protect the transcendence of God by denying that he has any sons. Philo's mystical and moralizing exegesis of Gen 6:1-4 is a general characteristic of his technique. It is borrowed from the ethical and anti-historical, anti-physical side of hellenistic Greek philosophy. Perhaps it might be said to be influenced by pagan mythology by way of negative reaction. The Christian nonsupernatural view--"sons of Seth" or believers--is most likely based on the NT use of "sons of God" for believers (e.g., in John 1:12), coupled with Gen 4:26 and 5:24.

The interpretation of מָלַח by "giants" is easily understandable for both the supernatural and nonsupernatural views. The word Nephilim only occurs elsewhere in the OT in Num 13:33, where it is associated with the large size of the Anakim. Perhaps the reference here to the Israelites being like grasshoppers in their sight explains the rabbinic remark (Gen. Rab. 26.7) that the "marrow of each one's thigh was eighteen cubits long." If we take the grasshopper's "thigh" as one inch long and the human thigh as one cubit long (ca. 18 inches), the proportion is exact!

Regarding the binding of the angels mentioned in 1 Enoch, Jub., 2 Pet and Jude, this feature may depend on an earlier source going back to explicit revelation, or it may be derived from Isa 24:21-22:

So it will happen on that day,  
That the LORD will punish the host of heaven on high  
And the kings of the earth, on earth.  
And they will be gathered together  
Like prisoners in the dungeon [lit. "pit"]  
And will be confined in prison  
And after many days they will be punished.

We would normally interpret this passage eschatologically because of the context. Yet it might be understood as the eschatological punishment for an earlier sin, especially if we follow the Qumran Isaiah MS 1Qlsa*, which reads הָעֹלָה (perfect) instead of the usual הָעָלָה (perfect with waw), giving a past tense instead of future:52

They were gathered together . . .  
And will be confined . . .  
And after many days they will be punished.

52 BHK, 64ln.
In any case the passage refers to the confinement in a pit of what appear to be angelic beings, like prisoners (chained?), with an eschatological punishment after many days. The reference in the context (Isa 24:18-19) to "windows above" being opened and the earth being split is certainly reminiscent of events at the beginning of the flood (Gen 7:11), though the terminology is not identical. Even if this passage is seen as strictly eschatological, its parallels with the flood may have suggested a parallel mode of punishment to interpreters favoring a supernatural view of Gen 6:1-4.

Most of the angelic names in *Enoch* are modeled on the biblical angelic names "Michael" and "Gabriel," using the theophoric element "El" for God and either angelic spheres of authority or divine attributes. One exception is "Shamhazai," but Ginzberg sees the first syllable as משה, "name," a common targumic substitute for the divine name. "Azazel," too, is of special interest, and it may suggest that other angelic names are derived from OT texts. The name (or something close to it) occurs in the scapegoat passage in Lev 16:8. One goat is for the LORD, the other for Azazel, taking לזרז as a proper noun instead of a term meaning "entire removal." The word may well have been puzzling, and the reference in Lev 17:7 to goats as objects of worship might have led early interpreters to speculate that there was something supernatural about "Azazel." Charles notes that "Dudael," the place of Azazel's binding in *1 Enoch* 10:4, is in the wilderness and on "rough and jagged rocks" just like the place to which the scapegoat is taken in Tg. Ps.-J.

Thus it appears that a number of details appearing in the various interpretations of Gen 6:2, 4 can be derived--rightly or wrongly--from other OT passages. This does not prove that they actually arose in this way.

CONCLUSIONS

We have now examined the ancient interpretation of Gen 6:2, 4 in Jewish literature, in Christian literature and in the NT in particular. The earliest extant view is the supernatural one, that the "sons of God" were angels and that the "Nephilim" were their gigantic offspring. The sin in this case was the unnatural union between angels and humans. Going beyond the text of Genesis, this view pictures the offending angels as being bound and cast into dark pits until the day of judgment. This interpretation seems to have been popular at the time of Christ. The nonsupernatural interpretations are not extant

54 BDB, 736.
until later and take two basic forms which we may for convenience label "Jewish" and "Christian." The Jewish view sees the "sons of God" as judges or noblemen and the "Nephilim" as violent warriors. The sin involved is unrestrained lust, rape, and bestiality. The Christian view sees the "sons of God" as Sethites or believers in general, the "daughters of men" as Cainites or unbelievers, and the sin as mixed marriage.

After investigating possible NT references to this passage, it appears highly likely that the NT does refer to this incident, almost certainly in Jude 6 and 2 Pet 2:4. Other passages are less certain, but 1 Cor 11: 10 and Matt 22:30 are probable. Though serious questions can be raised whether Matt 22:30 and parallels endorse or oppose the supernatural interpretation, Jude and 2 Pet clearly favor the supernatural position.

Do Jude and 2 Pet endorse this interpretation or only mention it? One might be inclined to dismiss Jude's reference as an *ad hominem* argument against opponents who accepted the OT pseudepigrapha since he apparently quotes *1 Enoch* 1:9 in v 14 and cites a no longer extant portion of the *Assumption of Moses* in v 9. Yet there is no hint in the context that Jude in any way distances himself from these citations. In 2 Pet 2, the whole structure of the argument (vv 4-9) indicates that Peter endorses the historicity of this angelic sin: if God judged those notorious sinners of antiquity, then he will judge these current false prophets who engage in similar activities.

Not only do Jude and 2 Peter seem to endorse the supernatural interpretation of Gen 6, they also mention some of the details found in *1 Enoch* and *Jub.* which do not occur in the Genesis account.

Liberal theologians have no difficulty here, since they treat all of this as superstitious nonsense, but how are those who believe in the Bible to respond?

Although part of the evangelical resistance to the supernatural interpretation is exegetical and part is theological, some resistance seems to be due to rationalistic assumptions. Especially in the fields of science, history and Biblical studies, a "minimal-miracle" stance may be adopted, if for no other reason than that miracles pose a roadblock to investigation. However, whenever a minimal-miracle approach begins to produce a crop of problem passages, we should consider the possibility that we are wresting Scripture or other data.

It is also possible that evangelicals along with liberals have adopted too readily the enlightenment-evolutionary view that the

ancients were ignorant and superstitious. Perhaps an over-reaction to the excesses of the medieval Catholic Church is also to blame. Of course the ancients (except in the case of inspiration) were fallible and influenced by the dominant worldviews of their times, but so are we. They did not have the leisure, technology, communications, and libraries that we have, so we should not expect their scholarship to be as impressive as ours. But they weren't fools! When all of human history testifies against our times to the reality of the supernatural and the occult, we evangelicals (of all people) would be foolish to dismiss this testimony out of hand, especially when it corroborates biblical testimony.

May it not be possible that we enlightened, 20th-century Christians can learn something positive from the ancient exegetes? Perhaps they were right in seeing an angelic incursion in Gen 6:1-4 and we are wrong in denying it. Perhaps with a great interest in the supernatural and angels some ancient interpreters scoured the Scriptures to locate any hints it might contain on this subject. In such a case, they might well have reached some valid insights which God preserved by inscripturation in the NT.

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THE EARTH OF GENESIS 1:2
ABIOTIC OR CHAOTIC?
PART I

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Introduction

The famous German scholar Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932), well-known advocate of *Formgeschichte*, tried to demonstrate that the battle in which Yahweh defeated the sea monster of the chaos was related to the Hebrew account of creation in Genesis 1. He assumed that the Babylonian creation account, with its *Chaoskampf* or battle between the creator-god and the powers of the chaos, was the basis for the mythical imagery that appears in the Bible.1

Since the discovery of the Ugaritic myths, the existence of a conflict between *Yahweh* and the sea dragons (*Leviathan* and *Rahab* in poetical texts of the OT) has been widely accepted.2 This Canaanite conflict motif has been related to the biblical creation story as "a missing link" which supports the apparent *Chaoskampf* in Gen 1:2. Frequently, the *Chaoskampf* that appears in the Babylonian *Enuma elish* and the Ugaritic Baal myth is considered the main foundation of any cosmogony in the Ancient Near East (ANE).3 For instance, J. Day assumed that Gen 1:2 is a demythologization of the original *Chaoskampf* myth of ancient Canaan.4 R. J. Clifford and J. J. Collins have proposed that Genesis 1 begins with a mythical combat between the dragon

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4 Day, 53.
of chaos and the divine sovereign.  

Gunkel stated that the Hebrew term "tehom" in Gen 1:2 had a Babylonian background. He suggested that "tehom" derived directly from Tiamat, the Babylonian goddess of the primordial ocean in the Enuma elish. Since Gunkel's statement, many scholars have assumed some kind of direct or indirect connection between the Babylonian Tiamat and the Hebrew "tehom." Many have accepted that the Hebrew "tehom" in Gen 1:2 has a mythological foundation in Tiamat, the goddess of the Enuma elish, in which Marduk the storm god fights and defeats Tiamat the sea dragon, thus establishing the cosmos.

The expression "tohu wabohu," "emptiness and waste," in Gen 1:2 is often considered a reference to this primordial "chaos," in strict opposition to "creation." The phrase is taken to refer to the earth in an abiotic or lifeless state, with no vegetation, animals, or human beings.

Gunkel also posited the theory, later supported by other scholars, that the ruah "elohim" in Gen 1:2c corresponds to the winds that Marduk sends against Tiamat, thus assuming that it is an expression that describes the primordial chaos.

The object of this three-part article is to discover whether in Gen 1:2 there is any evidence for the mythological battle between the creator-god and the powers of the chaos, Chaoskampf, such as Gunkel and many other scholars maintain. If we found such evidence, we would need to take heed

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10 See for example, B. K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974). This author points out that there are three main
to Gunkel's affirmation: "If it is the case, however, that a fragment of a cosmogonic myth is preserved in Genesis 1, then it is also no longer allowable to reject the possibility that the whole chapter might be a myth that has been transformed into narrative." But if, on the contrary, there is no linguistic or biblical foundation for that assumption, the creation account would no longer be a myth or compilation of myths similar to those of ANE literature. The creation story would then be a true, reliable, literal, and objective account of the origin of life on this planet.

To achieve this goal, these articles about the earth described in Gen 1:2 will analyze the Hebrew terms tohu wabohu, tehom, and ruah elohim in the OT and their equivalents in the ANE literature.

The Hebrew Text of Gen 1:2

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

Gen 1:2 is formed by three circumstantial clauses:

1. We ha'ares hay'ë ta tohu wabohu: "Now the earth was formless and empty"
2. wë hosek al--pë ne t'hom: "darkness was over the surface of the deep"
3. wë ruah 'ë lohim merahepet 'al--pë ne hammayim: "and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

In Semitic languages a circumstantial clause describes a particular condition. Verse 2 presents three clauses that describe three circumstances or conditions that existed at a particular time, which is defined by the verb interpretations of Gen 1:1-3 within Protestant thinking. These he calls the theory of the postcreation chaos (or theory of the restitution), in which chaos occurred after the original creation; the theory of the initial chaos, according to which chaos occurred in connection with creation; and the theory of the precreation chaos which he himself defends, according to which chaos occurred before the original creation (18, 19); and other authors such as: A. P. Ross, Creation and Blessing (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 106-107, 723; V. P. Hamilton, The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-11, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 117. As can be seen, the explanation and interpretation of Gen 1:2 are founded on chaos, whether before, during, or after creation.


form of the three clauses. In this verse the three coordinated clauses begin with a *waw* followed by a noun that functions as the subject of the clause.

The theme of the verse 2 is the earth; this is the great central theme, not only in the rest of Genesis 1, but also of the whole Bible. The earth is the center and object of biblical thought.

The exegesis of Gen 1:2 has been considered by scholars such as M. Alexandre, P. Beauchamp, V. P. Hamilton, D. Kidner, S. Niditch, A. P. Ross, N. M. Sarna, L. I. J. Stadelmann, G. von Rad, G. J. Wenham, Westermann, and E. J. Young.

"Clauses describing concomitant circumstances are introduced by the conjunction ו of accompaniment.... When the circumstances described are past or future, a finite form of a verb is employed. For the past a perfect aspect is used, e.g. הָיָה הָדוּלָה הָאָרֶץ הָגוֹאָל הָהוֹר הָאָרֶץ 'the earth having been a formless void' (Gen 1:2)" (R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*, 2d ed. [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976, 1992]), 83. In this case the verb *hayya* is in Qal perfect 3 feminine singular *hayta*. As C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch point out: "The three statements in our verse are parallel; the substantive and participial construction of the second and third clauses rests upon the נַחַלָה of the first. All three describe the condition of the earth immediately after the creation of the universe" (*Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. J. Martin ([Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986], 1:49).

For further bibliographical references on Gen 1:1-3 from 1885/86 to 1966, see C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. J. J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 75-76.

So Keil and Delitzsch, 1:48.


Hamilton, 108-117.


Ross, 106-107.


Westermann, 102-111.

The Semichiastic Structure of Gen 1:2

The Hebrew text of Gen 1:2 presents an incomplete antithetical chiastic structure (i.e., a quasi- or semichiastic antithetical structure, because it lacks the section A' which is antithetical to A) marked by the following linguistic and semantic parallelism:

A \[\text{Weha'ares hayeta tohu wabohu}\]: "Now the earth was formless and empty"

B \[\text{wehosek 'al--pene tehom}\]: "darkness was over the surface of the deep"

B' \[\text{weruah elohim merahepet 'al--pene hammayim}\]: "and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

The grammatical, semantic, and syntactic chiastic parallelism is clearly defined by the microstructures B \ B'(\ stands for antithetic parallelism) in which the expression "over the surface" \[\text{'al --pene}\] is repeated. Grammatically speaking, this expression is a preposition + plural masculine noun construct (prep. + p.m.n. cstr.).

The grammatical and semantic parallel \[\text{'al --p\textsuperscript{e}ne \textit{tehom} // 'al --p\textsuperscript{e}ne hammayim}\] represents a second example of paired words, \[\text{\textit{tehom} // hammayim}\] that appears in Ezek 26:19 and Ps 104:6; and \[\text{mayim // \textit{tehom}}\] that appear in Ezek 31:4; Hab 3:10; Jonah 2:6; Ps 33:7; 77:17; Job 38:30. Notice also the parallelism between \[\text{mayim // \textit{tehom}}\] and \[ruah \textit{lohim}\] in Exod 15:8. The antithetic concept is clearly indicated by the opposite or contrasting pair of words hosek "darkness" \ ruah "Spirit of God." The noun hosek is grammatically a masculine singular (m.s.n.), and ruah "lohim" is a feminine singular noun construct (f.s.n.cstr.) plus a masculine plural noun (m.p.n.). However, they present an exact syntactic correspondence and parallelism. Both have the same syntactic function, that of a subject.

Another syntactic aspect is important in this antithetic chiasm: the construct relation in \[\text{'al --p\textsuperscript{e}ne tehom} and \[\text{'al p\textsuperscript{e}ne hammayim}\]. This aspect of the Hebrew syntax is of great importance to the significance and the semantic and etymological origin of \textit{tehom}, as will be seen in the second part of this article.

A particular type of parallelism used in prose is the gender-matched parallelism. Gen 1:2 is an example of this type of parallelism, since it represent...

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28 Williams, 10-11.
the gender-matched pattern: Feminine + masculine // masculine + feminine // feminine+masculine.\textsuperscript{32}

Tohu wabohu \textit{in the Old Testament and the Literature of the Ancient Near East}

Before specifically considering this point, we must briefly analyze the Hebrew terms \textit{ha’ares} and \textit{hayesta} in Gen 1:2. The most used Egyptian term for "earth" is \textit{t3}. The antithesis for this term is the formula \textit{pt-t3}, "heaven" and "earth," by which it makes reference to the whole cosmos. The usual hieroglyphic symbol \textit{t3} represents a flood plain with grains of sand all around. In Sumerian and Akkadian there is a distinction between "earth" (\textit{ki} or \textit{ersetu}) and "country" (\textit{kur}, \textit{kalam}, or \textit{matu}). In Akkadian \textit{ersetu} means "earth," in opposition to "heaven." "Heaven and earth" (\textit{samu u ersetu}) means the universe. In Ugaritic \textit{‘rs} means "earth, ground, inferior world." The earth is also opposed to "heaven" and the clouds.\textsuperscript{33} Ugaritic literature also gives an extraordinary example of a pair of words, \textit{ars} // \textit{thmt}, chiastically related as in Gen 1:2: \textit{tant s’mm ‘m ars // thmt ‘mn kkbm}.\textsuperscript{34}

The pair of words \textit{‘eres} // \textit{ĕhom} also reveals an example of inclusive structure in the six days of the creation, where ‘al -- \textit{p’ne ĕhom} before the first day (Gen 1:2) matches ‘al -- \textit{p’ne ha’ares} after the sixth (Gen 1:29).\textsuperscript{35}

The Hebrew \textit{‘eres} occupies the fourth place among the most frequent nouns in the OT. The term appears 2,504 times in Hebrew and another 22

\textsuperscript{33} TDOT, 1:388-392.
\textsuperscript{34} R. E. Whitaker, \textit{A Concordance of the Ugaritic Literature} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 613.
\textsuperscript{35} Kselman, 164. For this type of inclusion or construction see D. N. Freedman's "Prolegomenon" to G. B. Gray, \textit{The Forms of Hebrew Poetry} (New York: KTAV, 1972), xxxvi-xxxvii. However, according to D.T. Tsumura the nature of the relationship between \textit{ha’ares} "earth" and \textit{ĕhom} "abyss, ocean" in Gen 1:2 is a hyponym. According to Tsumura, in modern linguistics, the relationship of meaning is called hyponym which sometimes is explained as inclusion. (i.e., what is referred to in the term A includes what is referred to in the term B). The former is preferred over the latter because a relationship of sense exists among lexical items rather than a relationship of reference. Thus the hyponym can be used also in a relationship between terms that have no reference. In Tsumura's own words: "Our term 'hyponym' therefore means that the sense [A] of the more general term ‘A’ (e.g. ‘fruit’) completely includes the ‘sense’ [B] of more specific term ‘B’ (e.g. ‘apple’), and hence what ‘A’ refers to includes what ‘B’ refers to. In other words, when the referent [B] of the term ‘B’ is a part of/belongs to the referent [A] of the term ‘A’, we can say that ‘B’ is \textit{hyponymous} to ‘A,’ ('A 'Hyponymous' Word Pair: ‘rs and \textit{thm} (i) in Hebrew and Ugaritic' [Bib 69 (1988): 258-269, esp. 259-260]). Therefore, in Gen 1:2 there is a hyponym in which \textit{ĕhom} "ocean" is a part of the \textit{ha’ares} "earth."
times in the Aramaic sections. The word tires designates: (1) cosmologically, the earth (in opposition to heaven) and solid ground (in opposition to water); (2) physically, the soil on which humans live; (3) geographically, certain regions and territories; (4) politically, certain sovereign regions and countries. In the most general sense, ‘eres designates the earth that together with the "heaven," samayim, comprises the totality of the universe. "Heaven and Earth" is an expression designating the whole world (Gen 1:1; 2:1, 4; 14:19, 22; etc.).

In addition to a bipolar view of the world, there is also a tripolar view: for instance, heaven-earth-sea (Exod 20:11; Gen 1:10, 20 and others); heaven-earth-water beneath the earth (Exod 20:4; Deut 5:8). But what is important to the OT is not the earth as part of the cosmos but what lives on it (Deut 33:16; Isa 34:1; Jer 8:16; etc.): its inhabitants (Isa 24:1, 5-6, 17; Jer 25:29-30; Ps 33:14; etc.), nations (Gen 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; Deut 28:10; etc.), and kingdoms (Deut 28:25; 2 Kgs 19:15; etc.). Thus the term "earth" may designate at the same time—as it does in other languages--the earth and its inhabitants (Gen 6:11; etc.). In its physical use, ‘eres designates the ground on which human beings, things, dust (Exod 8:12), and reptiles (Gen 1:26; 7:14; 8:19; etc.) are.36

The verb haya (to be) that appears in Gen 1:2 as hayêta in Qal perfect 3 f.s. is translated by the majority of the versions as "was" but may also be translated "became," as it appears in some versions. However, the syntactic order and the structure of the clause do not allow this translation here. The syntactic order in Gen 1:2 (first the subject and then the verb) is used to indicate the addition of circumstantial information and the absence of chronological or sequential occurrence. For that reason the translators of the LXX translated hayêta as "was" and not as "became."37 Besides, the Hebrew letter waw that appears at the beginning of Gen 1:2 is a "circumstantial waw" because it is joined to the subject "the earth" and not to the verb. Therefore it is better translated as "now." The translators of the LXX, who were very careful in the translation of the Pentateuch, translated it in that way.

The initial state of the earth in Gen 1:2 is described as tohu wabohu. This expression is translated into English as "formless and empty" (NIV). In the Greek versions it is translated as αορατος και ακατασκευαστος, "invisible and unformed" (LXX); κενωμα και ουθεν, "empty and nothing" (Aquila); θεν και ουθεν "nothing and nothing" (Theodotion); and αργον

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37 F. Delitzsch comments that the perfect preceded by the subject is the most usual way of describing the circumstances in which the subsequent account takes place (A New Commentary on Genesis [Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978],1:77).
Etymology and Usage of Tohu in the OT

Tohu is a masculine singular noun (m.s.n.) that means "formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness,... formlessness of primaeval earth in Gen 1:2", "wasteland, solitude or emptiness"; "emptiness, waste, desert, chaos, confusion"; "Wuste, Ode, Leere,... Gen 1:2 es ‘bedeutet die ode Wuste, and ist als Grundbegriff zur Schopfung gebraucht’", "caos, lo que no tiene forma ni medida, informe, inmensidad. Lo desmesurado; formulacion clara y directa de la negacion: nada, la nada, vacio, el vacio, nulidad,... caos informe en Gen 1:2.”

The term tohu appears 20 times in the OT, 11 of them in Isaiah. The different uses of the term can be classified, according to Westermann, in three groups that go from the concrete meaning of "desert" to the abstract "emptiness": (1) "Desert," the terrible and barren desert that leads to destruction: Deut 32:10; Job 6:18; 12:24 = Ps 107:40; (2) "Desert or devastation that threatens": Isa 24: 10; 34:11; 40:23; Jer 4:23; "the state that is opposed to the creation and precedes it": Gen 1:2; Isa 45:18; Job 26:7. 3; (3) "Nothing": 1 Sam 12:21 (2x); Isa 29:21; 40:17; 41:29; 44:29; 45:19; 49:4; 59:4.

The first and third groups are simple enough to define and describe. In the first, tohu is "earth, desert ground" (Deut 32:10), the "untilled land" where caravans die Gob 6:18), a "barren ground without roads" where people wander (Job 12:24; Ps 107:40). Therefore, the term refers to the desert as a "barren ground

43 L. A. Schokel, Diccionario Bíblico Hebreo-Español (Madrid: Trotta, 1994), 792. Translation: "Chaos; what has no shape or measure: shapeless, immensity, the excessive; a clear and direct formulation of the negation: nothing, the nothingness, empty, the emptyness, nullity,... shapeless chaos in Gen 1:2."
44 See A. Even-Shoshan, A New Concordance of the Old Testament (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1990), 1219. The 20 texts are: Gen 1:2; Deut 32:10; 1 Sam 12:21 (2x); Job 6:18; 12:24; 26:7; Ps 107:40; Isa 24:10; 29:21; 34:11; 40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 45:18-19; 49:4; 59:4; Jer 4:23.
45 Westermann, 102-10:3.
or land." In the third group *tohu* refers to a situation in which something that ought to be there is lacking. It is used in an abstract sense in which it appears in parallel with other nouns such as 'epes, "nothing"(Isa 41:29), *riq*, "empty" (Isa 49:4), and "empty arguments" (Isa 59:4, NIV).

In these passages *tohu* is better understood as "lack or emptiness" rather than "nothing."

Of special interest to this study are the uses of *tohu* in Westermann's second group, where the word describes the situation or condition of places such as the planet earth, land (region), or city. In Isa 24:10 we have *qiryat-tohu*, referring to the "desolate or deserted" state of a city, almost equivalent to the term *samma* in v. 12, which refers to the desolation of a city: "The ruined city lies desolate; the entrance to every house is barred" (NIV).

In job 26:7, Westermann thinks 'al -- *tohu* is directly opposed to the creation, though he does not translate it as chaos. But the expression *al -- tohu* is parallel to the expression 'al - *beli -- ma* "a place where there is nothing." Therefore, in this context a possible translation of *tohu* would be "a desert-like or empty place." 

Westermann points out that in Isa 45:18 *lo* - *tohu* is in direct opposition to the creation. However, here *tohu* is in parallelism with *lasebet*, Qal infinitive construct (Qal inf. cstr.), "to be inhabited" (NIV), from the verb *yasab* "to dwell.

The text does not indicate anything about a chaotic state in the earth: "he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited" (NIV). Instead, *tohu* in this text also means "a desert, an uninhabited place." Thus this verse may be better translated as "[earth] not to be a desert or uninhabited place he created it, to be inhabited he formed it." In other words, this verse explains that God

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46 E. J. Young translates *tohu* in Isa 44:9 as "unreality" and explains that the word "suggests an absence of all life and power" (*The Book of Isaiah*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972], 3:172).

47 Westermann, 103.


49 Westermann, 103. 

50 BDB, 442; Holladay, 146.

51 Isa 45:18f: to -*tohu be ra'ah* // Isa 45:18g: *lasebet y'sarah*. We can verify that it is a structure in parallel panels which is marked by the following microstructure:

A *lo--tohu* [Earth] not to be a desert or uninhabited place

B *b'ra'ah* he created it

A' *lasebet* to be inhabited

B' *y'sarah* he formed it

We observe a clear antithetical parallelism between A \ A', *lo'- tohu* "[Earth] not to be a desert or uninhabited place" //*lasebet* "[Earth] to be inhabited." As Watson points out when referring to the parallel types of words: "*antonymic word pairs* are made up of words opposite in meaning and are normally used in antithetic parallelism" (131). At the same time, there is a synonymous parallelism between B // B', *b'ra'ah* "he created it" //
did not create the earth to be uninhabited or desert but to be inhabited. Gen 1:2 can be understood in the same sense, that God created the earth to be inhabited, but "it was still desert or uninhabited" during the initial stage of the creation though it was in no sense in a chaotic state.

In Isa 45:19 the term tohu has been interpreted in two ways: concrete (locative) and abstract. The syntax is always understood in the same way: tohu as an adverb that modifies the verbal clause baggesuni, as part of the direct speech.\(^{52}\) The Tg. Isa. analyzes tohu in the same way: "!Buscad en vano (lryqnw) mi temor!\(^{53}\) However, its meaning and grammatical function must be analyzed by considering the parallel structure of the complete verse.\(^{54}\)

Therefore, from the literary structure in parallel panels, B' tohu is parallel with B bimeqom ‘eres hosek "in a land of darkness" (NIV). In Tsumura's words: "Tohu without a preposition directly corresponds either to ‘eres hosek or to hosek.... In this case, the term tohu, corresponding directly to hosek ‘darkness,’ probably means ‘desolation.’"\(^{57}\) To conclude, we must point out that in the Targums, the Talmudic and the Midrashic literature tohu is interpreted as "waste, desolation; vanity, idleness."\(^{57}\)

*Thw in Ugaritic Literature*

Once we have analyzed the etymology and the usage of tohu in the OT, we consider its etymology and usage in the Ugaritic literature. Until recently, y’sarah "he formed it." In Watson's words: "synonymous word pairs comprise a large class with a broad spectrum.... Its components are synonyms or near-synonyms and therefore almost interchangeable in character" (ibid.).


\(^{54}\) Isa 45:19a: lo'basseter dibbarti // Isa 45:19c: lo’ amararti f’zera ’ya aqob. Isa 45:19b: bim’qom 'eres hosek // Isa 45:19d: tohu baqq’suni. We can observe that it is a structure in parallel panels that is marked by the following microstructures:

A lo'basseter dibbarti I have not spoken in secret
B bim’qom 'eres hosek from somewhere in a land of darkness
A' lo’ amararti f’zera ’ya aqob I have not said to Jacob's descendants
B' tohu baqq’suni’ Seek me in vain' (NIV)

The syntactical and morphological parallelism is evident between A \A' in the negative sentence, and the tense and the person of the verb, lo’ dibbarti negative+Pi’el perfect 1 common singular // lo’ amararti negative+Qal perfect 1 common singular. Meanwhile, there is a semantical parallelism between B // B’, ‘eres hosek // tohu, with the same nouns as in Gen 1:2 (for a linguistic study of the different types of biblical parallelisms, see Berlin, 32-58).

\(^{57}\) Tsumura, 362-363.

\(^{57}\) M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Title, 1943), 1651.
recently, the etymology of tohu was explained in the light of the Arabic tih, waterless desert, trackless wilderness.\textsuperscript{58} However, as Tsumura points out, the Arabic term, with a second weak consonant h, does not explain the final long u of the Hebrew tohu.\textsuperscript{59}

The Ugaritic term equivalent to the Hebrew tohu is the thw nominal form that appears only once in the Ugaritic literature,\textsuperscript{60} in the cycle of Baal and Mot as follows:

\begin{quote}
\texttt{pnp.s.nps.lbim [15] thw}
"But my appetite is an appetite of lions (in) the waste,
\texttt{hm.brlt.anhr[16] bym}
"just as the longing of dolphin(s) is in the sea."\textsuperscript{61}
\end{quote}

Del Olmo Lete presents the following translation of the same text: "Tengo, si, el apetito del leon de la estepa, o la gana del tiburon (que mora) en el mar."\textsuperscript{62}

In the context of the two lines of Ugaritic text, \texttt{lbim.thw} "of a lion in the steppe [desert]" corresponds to \texttt{anhr.bym}, "of a shark in the sea," since \texttt{nps} and \texttt{brlt} are a well known idiomatic pair.\textsuperscript{63} Del Olmo Lete maintains that the Ugaritic term \texttt{thw} is a cognate of the Heb \texttt{tohu}.\textsuperscript{64}

Considering the evidence presented, we can affirm that the Ugaritic term \texttt{thw} is a cognate of the Heb \texttt{tohu} and both have a common meaning: "desert." They are probably nouns with a common Semitic root, *\texttt{thw}. In relation to this, Huehnergard points out that the text or alphabetical form \texttt{thw} is probably /\texttt{tuhwu}/ "wasteland."\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{58} Klein, 692.
\textsuperscript{62} G. Del Olmo Lete, \textit{Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan} (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1981), 214. Translation: "I have, yes I do, the appetite of a lion on the steppe, the longing of a shark (who lives) in the sea."
\textsuperscript{63} On p. 635 Del Olmo Lete says: "\texttt{thw}: n.m., ‘estepa, desierto’ (cf. heb. \texttt{tohu}; cf. Gibson, 159)."
\textsuperscript{64} Dietrich, Loretz and Sanmartin, 1.18 IV 25, 36-37, 55, 58. Del Olmo Lete notes that \texttt{thw} "steppe, desert" is antonymous to \texttt{ym}, "sea."
Etymology of *bhw

*Bohu* is similar to *tohu* because it is a m.s.n. which means "'emptiness' of primeval earth", "emptiness (// formlessness, + earth) ... formlessness and emptiness"; "Heb. *bohu* 'vacuity, vide'; Arab. *bahr* 'espace degage, trouee, etc.', *bahiya* 'etre vide, desert', *bahi* 'vide, desert'", "void, waste", "emptiness, chaos", "Leere, Ode"; "vacio, caos, caos informe." The term *bohu* appears only 3 times in the OT, always with *tohu*: Gen 1:2; Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23. Its meaning will be considered in the section on the usage of phrase *tohu waboho*. In the Targums, as well as the Talmudic and the Midrashic literature, Jastrow finds that *bohu* is interpreted as "chaotic condition; always with לָנוּש".

*Bhw in the Ancient Near Eastern Literature

The etymology of *bohu* has been explained through the Arabic *bahiya*, "to be hollow, empty." This Arabic term is used to describe the "empty" state of a store or house that has little or nothing in it. Therefore, its meaning is more concrete than abstract, "nothing, empty."

Albright suggested that the Akkadian term *bubutu*, "emptiness, hunger," comes from *buhbuhtu* and is possibly a cognate of the Heb *bohu*. However, the *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary* does not list "emptiness" as a meaning of *bubutu* A. It translates the term as: "famine, starvation, want, hunger, sustenance."
and Von Soden suggests "hunger" as a possible meaning of *bubutu. Neither of these Akkadian terms is a cognate of Heb *bohu.\(^78\)

It has been also suggested that the term *bohu is related to Phoenician divine name *baαu, the goddess of "night."\(^79\) Tsumura indicates that it is phonologically possible to propose an original "Canaanite" form */bahwu/ for both Heb *bohu and Phoenician */bah(a)wu/, which was apparently represented in Greek script as ba-a-u.\(^80\) But he adds that there is no evidence that the Hebrew term had any connection with the Phoenician divine name, except for its possible origin. in a common root, *bhw.\(^81\) Likewise, Cassuto, after indicating that the word was found in the earlier Canaanite poems, adds: "but there is no connection apparently with the Mesopotamian goddess Ba-u."\(^82\)

Recently Gorg suggested that *tohu and *bohu must be explained by the Egyptian terms th3 and bh3.\(^83\) This proposal is highly speculative since no hendiadys of these terms is known."

In conclusion, taking into account available evidence, although there is no final etymological explanation, the Heb *bohu seems to be a Semitic term based on the root *bhw and is probably a cognate of Arabic *bahiya, "to be empty."

*Thw and *bhw in the OT

Albright's affirmation that the clause *tohu wabo hu means "chaos" and

\(^79\) Albright, 366, n. 7.
\(^80\) Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters*, 22. This author proposes the following evolution of the original form for the Heb *bohu*: */bdhwu/ > */buhwu/ > */buhuu/ > */bohu/ > */bohu/.
\(^81\) Ibid. immediately adds the possible origin of *bohu in an original form */bihwu/ from a Ugaritic example written syllabically (ibid., n. 26).
\(^82\) Ibid.
\(^84\) Hendiadys is defined as: "The use of two substantives, joined by a conjunction, to express a single but complex idea. The two words may be collocated, be joined by a copula or be in apposition. Hendiadys is used very often in Hebrew.... The important aspect of hendiadys is that its components are no longer considered separately but as a single unit in combination" (Watson, 324-325). Such is the case of *tohu wabohu in Gen 1:2. E. A. Speiser explains: "The Heb. pair *tohu wa-bohu is an excellent example of hendiadys, that is, two terms connected by 'and' and forming a unit in which one member is used to qualify the other" (*Genesis*, AB [New York: Doubleday, 1962], 5, n. 2a).
that *tohu* refers to a watery chaos is shared by many modern scholars, including Cassuto.\(^{85}\) According to most modern scholars, the expression *tohu wabohu* in Gen 1:2 is understood as the primeval "chaos, confusion, disorganization" and is, therefore, in direct opposition to creation.\(^{86}\) On the other hand, Burner--Klein points out that *tohu wabohu* describes the state of the earth immediately after God had created the world. From the LXX and the ancient Greek versions, as well as the Qumran materials, he concludes that the phrase refers to a created, yet shapeless earth.\(^{87}\)

To complete the study we must consider Isa 34:11 and Jer 4:23, where *tohu* and *bohu* appear. In Isa 34:11 tohu and bohu appear in parallel expressions\(^{88}\): 

\[
qaw - tohu "the measuring line of thw" \text{(NIV)} \quad ii'abne --- bohu "the plumb line of bhw" \text{(NM)}. 
\]

This passage clearly refers to an uninhabited place. Basic


\(^{86}\) See Alexandre, 77; Beauchamp, 162-163; Hamilton, 108; Kidner, 44; Niditch, 18; Ross, 106; Sarna, 6; Stadelman, 12; Wenham, 15; Westermann, 103; Young, 33-34.

\(^{87}\) D. Burner-Klein, "Tohu u and bohu: Zur Auslegungsgeschichte von Gen 1,2a," *Henoch* 15 (1993): 3-41. Burner-Klein analyzes the LXX, Origen, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, which use a variety of images to translate the clause: "the earth was invisible," "uncultivated," "a desert," "an empty space," "nothing." His study of Qumran materials renders the following interpretations: "a desolate country," "vanity" and "empty." Rabbinic literature interprets the clause as a negative principle, primeval matter that God already found at creation, i.e., a substratum of the *creatio ex nihilo*, created matter but shapeless yet. In a Karaite commentary on Genesis he found the idea of an empty earth, without buildings. His study included Christian Bible commentaries that develop similar concepts in opposition to Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the world.


\(^{89}\) Isa 34:11a: *wiresuha qaat w’qippod // Isa 34:11b: w’yansop w’ ‘oreb yisk’nu-bah; Isa 34:11c: *w’nata aleyha qaw-tohu // Isa 34:11d: we’abne--bohu*. The structure in parallel panels is marked by the following microstructures:

- A *wiresuha qaat w’qippod* The desert owl and screech owl will possess it
- A’ *w’yansop w’ ‘oreb yiskenu --- bah* the great owl and the raven will nest there
- B *w’nata aleyha qaw-tohu ... the measuring line of chaos
- B’ * ‘abne - bohu* and the plumb line of desolation (NIV)

There is a semantic and syntactic synonymous parallelism between A // A’, *wiresuha qaat w’qippod* "The desert owl and screech owl will possess it" // *w’yansop w’ ‘oreb yiskenu - bah* "the great owl and the raven will nest there." In both cases, at a semantic level, the lines refer to birds. On the syntactic level, there is also a subject+verb (+suffix) // subject+verb (+suffix) parallelism, but with the components of the clauses inverted. Likewise, there is semantic and syntactic synonymous parallelism between B // B’, *w’nata
to the understanding of Isa 34:11 as a land uninhabited by human beings is the grammatical and semantic parallelism of the verbs יָשָׁרְז, "take possession of," Qal perfect 3 common plural מְשַׁרְז, "will possess it"; and יָשִּׁים "live in, settle," Qal imperfect 3 masculine plural מָשִּׁים, "will dwell," in Isa 34:11a and Isa 34:11b. Besides, an exegesis of the immediately preceding verse, Isa 34:10cd, clearly shows the meaning of Isa 34:11: an uninhabited land." In Young's words: "the land will become a desolation and waste so that it can no more receive inhabitants."93 Therefore, in Isa 34:11 we do not find linguistic or exegetical evidence for any chaotic situation.

Jer 4:23 contains the following parallel structure:94

A raiti et –ha 'ares I looked at the earth,
B w'hinneh---tohu wabohu and it was formless and empty;
A' w'el -hassamayim and at the heavens,
B' w'en 'oram and their light was gone (NIV).

It has often been stated that Jer 4:23-26 describes a return to the primitive chaos.95 But this point of view is highly influenced by the traditional exegesis of the expression tohu wabohu as "chaos" in Gen 1:2 and not on the analysis of the context of Jer 4:23. In vv. 23-26, each of the verses begins with raiti,

'aleyha qaw- tohu: "the measuring line of chaos" // w'abne- bohu "and the plumb line of desolation." In both lines we find the same nouns that appear in Gen 1:2, tohu and bohu. Finally, both nouns are in a construct relation (on grammatical, semantic, and syntactic parallelism, see Berlin, 31-102).

90 BDB, 439; Holladay, 145.
91 BDB, 1014-1015; Holladay, 371.
92 Isa 34:10cd: middor lador te'hrab l'nesah n'sahim eyn ' ober bah "From generation to generation it will lie desolate; no one will ever pass through it again" (NIV). Thus Isa 34:10d interprets Isa 34:10c and 34:11 in a definite semantic parallelism to: middor laddor te'hrab, "From generation to generation it will lie desolate."
93 Young indicates that the prophet Isaiah uses the language of Gen 1:2 (Book of 1saiah, 2:438).
94 There is an antithetical semantic parallelism between A // A', raiti 'et- ha 'ares "I looked at the earth" // w'el-hassamayim "and at the heavens." These are the basic components of the Hebrew conception of the bipartite structure of the universe, earth and heavens. There is also a grammatical and semantic parallelism between B // B', w'hinneh-tohu wabohu "and it was formless and empty" // w'en 'oram "and their light was gone." This parallelism can be observed at a grammatical level between the nouns tohu and bohu in 4:23b, and or in 4:23d, both are m.s.n.; at a semantic level, both concepts imply the lack of something, both on the earth ("formless and empty") and the heavens ("light").
95 For example, Holladay affirms that Jeremiah "envisages a ‘de-creation’ of the cosmos, the world again become the chaos before creation began" (W. L. Holladay, Jeremiah [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986], 1:164; see also W. McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986], 1:106-107).
"I saw," and the word wehinneh, "and behold," is repeated in each verse. The exegesis of verse 23 is completed and confirmed by the interpretation of verses 25-26, which are translated: "I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the Lord" (NIV).

There is a precise positive-negative syntactic parallelism between the vv. 23 and 25-26, "I looked at the earth" (4:23 a) // "I looked and there were no people (4:25a); "I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert" (4:26a) and "and at the heavens" (4:23c) // "every bird in the sky had flown away" (4:25b). Therefore, v. 23a, "I looked at the earth," is interpreted in vv. 25a-26a, "I looked, and there were no people"; "I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert." Likewise, v. 23c, "and at the heavens" is also interpreted by v. 25b, "every bird in the sky had flown away." Therefore, the earth or land of Jer 4:23 was uninhabited, with no human beings on it; "there were no people." It was also arid and unproductive: "the fruitful land was a desert." On the other hand, the heavens of Jer 4:23 are empty, without light ("their light was gone") and without birds ("every bird in the sky had flown away").

The interpretation of tohu wabohu in the Targums also helps solve the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of Gen 1:2. On Gen 1:2 the Tg. Neof reads as follows, according to two translators: Diez Macho and G. Anderson.

Y la tierra estaba tehi‘ y behi‘ deshabitada de hombres y bestias y vacía de todo cultivo de plantas y arboles.98 Now the earth was tehi‘ and behi‘ [meaning it was] desolate (sdy) with respect to people and animals and empty (rygn )in respect to all manner of agricultural work and trees."

On his translation of Tg. Neof. Anderson says:
This text first reproduces the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew pair tohu wabohu and then interprets them. The first term, tohu, is interpreted to mean an absence of faunal life; the second term, bohu, the absence of

96 See Berlin, 53-57.
97 Jer 4:23a: raiti 'et---ha'ares //Jer 4:25a-26a: raiti w' hinneh 'en ha'adam ... raiti w' hinneh hakkarmel hammidbar; Jer 4:23c: w' el-hassamayim // Jer 4:25b: of kol- op hassamayim nadadu. The following microstructures are evident.
A raiti et -haares I looked at the earth
B w' el--hassamayim and at the heavens
A'ra itl w' hinneh en ha'adam ... raiti w' hinneh hakkarmel hammidbar I looked, and there were no people ... I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert
B'w' kol- op hassamayim nadadu every bird in the sky had flown away (NIV).
floral life. No longer do *tohu wabohu* connote a primeval substrate "chaos." Rather they simply describe the earth in an unfinished state. The earth was not created as a state of chaos; rather it is simply devoid of the living matter which will be created in days 3, 5 and 6. Exegesis has brought order to the unordered. All other targums follow this general exegetical direction.  

In brief, the expression *tohu wabohu* refers to a "desert-uninhabited" (Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23) and "arid or unproductive" (Jer 4:23) state. Neither text gives any linguistic or exegetical evidence to support the existence of a situation of mythic chaos in the earth.

*Thw and *bhw in the Ugaritic Literature

Several studies have pointed to the similarity between the Heb *tohu wabohu* and the Ugaritic *tu-a-bi[u(?)].* Tsumura proposes a possible explanation of the morphological correspondence between the Hebrew expression *tohu wabohu* and the Ugaritic *tu-a-bi[u(?)].* It is, therefore, possible that the Ugaritic *tu-a-bi [u(?)]* and the Hebrew *tohu wabohu* are two versions of the same idiomatic expression in the Northwestern Semitic.

However, scholars such as J. Huehnergard have proposed a different morphological relation, considering the Hebrew expression *tohu wabohu* as an equivalent of the Ugaritic *tu-a pi [ku(?)]*, since the verb form *hpk*, "to upset or overthrow," is identified in the Ugaritic alphabetical texts. In this way, both interpretations *to-a-bi (u(?))and to-a pi [ku(?)]* are possible from a phonological and morphological point of view.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, considering OT and ANE literature, the expression *tohu*...
wabohu in Gen 1:2 must be interpreted as the description of a "desert, uninhabited, arid and unproductive" place. The earth of Gen 1:2, which "was" hay'ata tohu wabohu, refers to the earth in an "empty" state with no vegetation, animals, or people. Hence the title of this series of articles: "The Earth of Genesis 1:2: Abiotic or Chaotic." The concept that appears in Gen 1:2 is an abiotic concept of the earth; i.e., Gen 1:2 describes an earth in which there is no life; it presents the absence of life-vegetable, animal, and human. That life appears in the following verses of Genesis 1 by the fiat of God. The Hebrew idiomatic expression tohu wabohu refers to an earth that is "uninhabited and unproductive," owing to the absence of life, of fauna, and of flora at this stage of the creation. At a later stage the earth will be "inhabited and productive." In no case does the phrase describe a chaotic state of the earth as the result of mythical combats between the gods of the myths and legends of Israel's neighbors.

The main reason why the author describes the earth as tohu wabohu is to inform the audience that the earth "is not yet" the earth such as they know it. Westermann puts it this way: "Creation and the world are to be understood always from the viewpoint of or in the context of human existence." In other words, it is necessary to use literary language and figures common to the audience to communicate to human beings the theme of creation. Therefore, the author uses in this verse language originating in his life experience (desert, empty, uninhabited, unproductive places) to explain the initial situation or condition of the earth.

The words of Westermann summarize well the findings on Gen 1:2:

There is no sign of either personification or mythological allusion in the biblical use of הָוֶה.... The course of the debate about the mythical explanation of הָוֶה הָוֶה indicates clearly that the arguments for a mythical background are becoming weaker and weaker. The discussion can now be considered closed.

107 See also N. H. Tur-Sinai, The Book of Job: A New Commentary (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967), 381: "in Gen 1:2 ... [tohu] describes the barrenness of the earth before anything grew on it."

108 Westermann, 104.

109 Westermann, 103.
THE EARTH OF GENESIS 1:2
AB IOTIC OR CHAOTIC?

PART II

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1. Hosek and ‘al ~ pene in Gen 1:2

Etymology of *hsk

Before specifically considering the Hebrew term ‚hom in the OT and in the literature of the ANE, we analyze the Hebrew words hosek and ‘al-pene in Gen 1:2. Hosek is a masculine singular noun that means "darkness, obscurity,"1 "darkness,"2 "darkness, obscurity,"3 "Finsternis kosmich,"4 "oscuridad, tinieblas, lobreguez, sombra."5

Words similar to the Heb root hsk exist in Phoenician, Punic, biblical and extrabiblical Aramaic, as well as in later Semitic languages. This root does not appear in Ugaritic and Akkadian texts. In the MT the verb only appears in the Qal form "to be/come to be dark" and Hiphil "make dark, darken." The noun hosek means "darkness, obscurity." The derived nouns include haseka "darkness," mahsak "dark, secret place," and the adjective hasok "dark."

The root appears 112 times in the OT, once in Aramaic (Dan 2:22). The verb appears 17 times (11 x in Qal and 6x in Hiphil). The noun hosek appears 79 times, haseka 8 times, mahsak 7 times, and the adjective only once (Prov 22:29).6

In Egyptian, the term for darkness is kkw, in Sumerian it is kukku,

1 BDB, 365.
6 TDOT, 5:245.
which is represented by the double writing of the sign GI₆, which means "black" and "night." In the Targums and in Talmudic and Midrashic literature hosek is interpreted as "darkness." In Gen 1:2 hosek is used to refer to the primeval "darkness" that covered the world. In Gen 1:3ff, God created light and "separated the light from the darkness." The separation is conceived both in spatial and temporal terms. In Gen 1:5 God "called the darkness night." This name is more than an act of identification; by naming darkness God characterized it and expressed its nature and even indicated his control over it. God, who created light and darkness as separate entities, on the fourth day of creation put them under the "laws" of the heavenly lights which separated "light from darkness" (Gen 1:18).

The function of darkness in the cosmos is later explained in texts such as Ps 104:20, where the function of the light and the darkness is to indicate the amount of time for the everyday life routine of animals and human beings. In many texts, hosek is equivalent or parallel to "night" (Josh 2:5; Job 17:12; 24:16; Ps 104:20). The word appears more times in Job, Psalms, and Isaiah than in all of the other biblical books together.

The OT emphasizes that darkness is under God's control (2 Sam 22:2; Ps 18:2 [28]; Job 1:8; Isa 42:16; Jer 13:16). The ninth plague of Egypt (Exod 10:21-23) illustrates: "So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and total darkness [hosek-"pela] covered all Egypt for three days." This event was extraordinary since Pharaoh, the son and the representative of the sun-god, was considered the source of light for his country. The darkness directly attacked the great sun-god of Egypt. Another example of God's power over darkness occurs in the desert when the Lord used darkness to protect his people (Exod 14:20; Josh 24:7).

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7 Ibid., 246-247.
8 M. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumin, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalami, and the Midrashic Literature (New York: Title, 1943), 511.
9 TWOT, 1:331.
10 N. H. Ridderbos, "Genesis i.1 and 2," in Studies on the Book of Genesis, ed. Berend Gemser, Oudtestamentische Studien, v. 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 239. This author notes that God gave a name to darkness and discusses the importance of giving a name in the OT.
11 TWOT, 1:331.
12 TDOT, 5:249.
13 TWOT, 1:331.
14 All scriptural texts are taken from the New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978).
15 TDOT, 5:249-250.
Past studies tended to see in Genesis 1 an antagonism between light and darkness, the scheme of Marduk's fight against the monster of chaos that is described in the Babylonian creation myth. It must be emphasized that nowhere in the OT is mention made of a battle or dualism between light and darkness. Neither is the primeval ocean or darkness considered a chaotic power or mythical enemy of God. God is the creator of both light and darkness (Isa 45:7); his kindness transcends the antithesis of light and darkness (Ps 139:12).

E. J. Young indicates that darkness in Gen 1:2 was merely one characteristic of the unformed earth. Man could not live in darkness, and the first step in making the earth habitable was the removal of darkness. Moreover, Young presents the theological meaning of darkness by stating that God named the darkness, just as he did light. Both are therefore good and well-pleasing to him; both are created, and both serve his purpose, making up the day. Thus, darkness is recognized in Genesis 1 as a positive good for man.

In a recent study about darkness in Gen 1:2, based on the text rather than on past exegesis, Nicolas Wyatt proposes some interesting points: (1) The literary structure of the verse is important to the interpretation and the meaning of hosek; therefore, "darkness" corresponds in some way to ruah 'elohim "God's spirit." (2) If ruah 'elohim denotes some divine quality, hosek must denote some similar quality; an example is Ps 18:1, where darkness appears as the place of invisibility and possibly the place of the Deity (see Deut 4:11, 23, where darkness seems to be the appropriate environment for the divine voice); darkness is a figure of invisibility. (3) The logical structure of the verse implies the initial stages of the Deity's self-revelation: it is an unusual account of a theophany. Gen 1:2 refers to God's invisibility in the context of a primeval cosmogony.

In short, the term hosek "darkness" refers to an uninhabited Earth, where human beings could not live until God created light. Furthermore, the logical structure of the verse implies the Deity's self-revelation, an unusual account of a theophany.

19 Ibid, 21, 35 n. 33.
22 Ibid, 550-552.
'al ~ pene

'al-pene is a preposition + masculine plural noun construct which means "face ... surface, upon the face of the deep,"23 "face = visible side: surface, p'ne tehom, p'ne hammayim,24 "face, surface,"25 "superficie del ocean = superficie de las aguas."26

In Hebrew, as in other Semitic languages, the noun appears only in plural. Panim is one of the most frequent words in the OT, appearing more than 2100 times. However, in the vast majority of the texts panim is joined to a preposition (which may be 'l, min or 'al) thus making a new prepositional expression. In many such texts the nominal meaning ("face") has been lost.27

Panim, especially when related to concepts such as country, land, sea, and sky, means "surface," mainly in the construction 'al-pene. The preposition 'al-pene related to concepts such as 'adama "land, ground"; 'eres "land, country"; mayim "water" (Gen 1:2); 'hem "primeval abyss" (Gen 1:2) means "on (the surface of)" or "towards (the surface)."28 This construction is important in determining the etymology and the meaning of the Hebrew word tehom.

2. Etymology of *thm

The Hebrew word tehom in Gen 1:2 is translated into English as "deep." In the Greek LXX it is translated δυσσος "abyss.28

Tehom is a feminine singular noun that means "primeval ocean, deep,29 "deep sea, primeval ocean,"30 "Urmeer, Urflut, 'als ein der Schopfung voransgehendes Element,"31 "oceano, abismo, sima, manantial. Especialmente el oceano primordial, abisal, en parse subterraneo, que

23 BDB, 816, 819.
24 Holladay, 293.
25 Klein, 513-514. It is related to the Phoenician דַּנֵן (= face), see Z. S. Harris, A Grammar of the Phoenician Language (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1936), 137; Ugaritic pnm (= into); Akkadian panu (= face, surface); Syriac קְנִי (`side).
26 Schockel, 793. Translation: "surface of the ocean - surface of the waters."
28 Ibid., 2:561, 563.
30 BDB, 1063; Holladay, 386.
31 Klein, 693.
32 KBS, 1558.
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aflora en lagos, pozos, manantiales, y esta presente en mares y ríos (de ahí su uso en plural), . . . superficie del océano."32

*Tehom* is the Hebrew form of the Semitic word *tiham-(at) "sea," which in Akkadian appears as the usual term for "sea" *ti’amtum* (later *tamtum*).33 In the Targums, as well as the Talmudic and the Midrashic literature, *tehom* is interpreted as "deep, depth, interior of the earth."34

The construct relation between ‘*al-pene* and *tehom* (as well as *e’al-pene* and *hammayim*) contributes to the determination of the meaning of *tehom*.35

Arguing against taking *tehom* as a personified being, A. Heidel points out:

If *tehom* were here treated as a mythological entity, the expression "face" would have to be taken literally; but this would obviously lead to absurdity. For why should there be darkness only on the face of *tehom* and not over the entire body? "On the face of the deep" is here used interchangeably with "On the face of the waters," which we meet at the end of the same verse. The one expression is as free from mythological connotation as is the other."

Thus the expression ‘*al-pene* *tehom*, "on the surface of the *tehom*," indicates that it does not refer to a mythical being but to the mass of waters."

**Supposed Babylonian Origin of *tehom***

B. W. Anderson, among others, assumes that there is some kind of relationship or linguistic dependence between the Babylonian *Tiamat* and the Hebrew *tehom*.38 Scholars who followed Gunkel have maintained that the

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32 Schockel, 792. Translation: "ocean, abyss, chasm, spring. Especially the primeval, abyssal ocean which is partly underground, and outcroppings in lakes, wells, springs, and is present in seas and rivers (hence its use in plural) ... surface of the ocean."

33 Jenni and Westermann, 2:1286.

34 Jastrow, 1648.

35 See B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns,1990), 240-241. See R. Ouro, "The Earth of Genesis 1:2: Abiotic or Chaotic, Part 1," *AUSS* 36 (1998): 259-276. Paul Jouon and T. Muraoka indicate: "A noun can be used in close conjunction with another noun to express a notion of possession, of belonging, etc.... The genitival relationship is expressed by the close phonetic union of the two nouns, the first of which is said to be constructed on the second.... The two nouns put in a genitival relationship form a compact unit, and theoretically nothing must separate them" (*A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, Subsidia Biblica 14/1,11 [Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991],1:275; 2:463). Finally, C. L. Seow points out: "The words in such a construct chain are thought to be so closely related that they are read as if they constituted one long word" (*A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, rev. ed. [Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995], 116).


37 Jenni and Westermann, 2:2190.

38 B. W. Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism*
author of Genesis borrowed the Babylonian name *Tiamat* and demythologized it. But, as Tsumura points out, if the Hebrew *tehom* were an Akkadian loanword, it should have a phonetic similarity to *ti’amat*. In fact, there is no example of Northwestern Semitic borrowing Akkadian /h/ as /h/. Moreover, it is phonologically impossible for the Hebrew *tehom* to be borrowed from the Akkadian *Tiamat* with an intervocalic /h/, which tends to disappear in Hebrew (e.g., /h/ of the definite article /ha-/ in the intervocalic position).

Therefore, *tehom* cannot linguistically derive from *Tiamat* since the second consonant of *Ti’amat*, which is the laryngeal alef, disappears in Akkadian in the intervocalic position and would not be manufactured as a borrowed word. This occurs, for instance, in the Akkadian *Ba’al* which becomes *Bel*.

All this suggests that *Tiamat* and *tehom* must come from a common Semitic root *thm*. The same root is the base for the Babylonian *tamtu* and also appears as the Arabic *tihamatu* or *tihama*, a name applied to the coastline of Western Arabia, and the Ugaritic *t-h-m* which means "ocean" or "abyss." The root simply refers to deep waters and this meaning was
maintained in Hebrew as a name for water in the deep ocean. Thus, the popular position that the Hebrew תֵּהוֹמ was borrowed from the Babylonian divine name Tiamat, to which it is mythologically related, lacks any basis.

Well-known Assyriologists such as W. G. Lambert, T. Jacobsen, and A. W. Sjoberg have discussed the supposed connection between Genesis 1 and the Enuma elish. These scholars doubt the influence of Mesopotamia on the mythological and religious concepts of peoples living along the Mediterranean coast; instead, they see a strong influence of that region on Mesopotamia. W. G. Lambert pointed out that the watery beginning of Genesis is not an evidence of some Mesopotamian influence. Moreover, he saw no clear evidence of conflict or battle as a prelude to God's division of the cosmic waters. T. Jacobsen also maintains that the story of the battle between the thunderstorm god and the sea originated on the Mediterranean coast, and from there moved eastward toward Babylon.

Furthermore, in some ancient Mesopotamian creation accounts, the sea is not personified and has nothing to do with conflict. In those traditions, the creation of the cosmos is not connected to the death of a dragon as it is in the Enuma elish. Tsumura concludes that since some accounts never associated the creation of the cosmos to the theme of the conflict, there is no reason to accept that the earlier stage, without the conflict-creation connection, evolved into a later stage with this connection. Frankly, the evolutionary process should be reversed: from an earlier stage with the mythological conflict-creation connection to a

45 TWOT, 2:966.
46 See also Tsumura, 47.
49 Ibid., 96-109.
51 Tsumura quotes as an example a bilingual version of the "Creation of the World by Marduk," which belongs to the Neo-Babylonian period and describes the creation of the cosmos without mentioning any theme of conflict or battle. In this myth, the initial circumstances of the world are described simply as "all the earth was sea" (49).
52 Ibid.
more recent stage without the mythological conflict-creation connection.

In conclusion, the Hebrew term *thom* is simply a variant of the common Semitic root *thm* "ocean," and there is no relation between the account of Genesis and the mythology of *Chaoskampf*.

**Supposed Canaanite Origin of tehom**

Since the discovery of the Ugaritic myths, a Canaanite origin for the conflict between Yahweh and the sea dragons has been widely propounded. This motif is thought to be related to creation and is proposed as a basis of a supposed *Chaoskampf* in Gen 1:2.

Recently, J. Day stated that Gen 1:2 was a demythologization of an original myth of *Chaoskampf* coming from the ancient Canaan.53 He suggested that the term *thom* can be traced back to the early Canaanite dragon myth.54 Therefore, he understands the Hebrew term *thom* as a depersonification of the Canaanite mythological divine name.55

However, scholars have pointed out that the myth of the Baal-Yam conflict in the existing Ugaritic texts is not related to the creation of the cosmos;56 the storm god Baal is not a creator-god as is Marduk in the *Enuma elish*.57 In the Baal cycle there is no evidence that he creates the cosmos from the bodies of defeated monsters as does Marduk.58 In Ugaritic mythology, El is the creator-god; as the creator of humanity he is called "Father of humanity."59 No other god fulfills any role in the creation of the cosmos.60

Finally, if the account of the creation in Genesis were a demythologization of a Canaanite dragon myth, the term *yam* "sea" should appear at the beginning of the account, but this term does not

54 Ibid., 50.
55 Ibid.
57 Tsumura, 64.
60 See also P. D. Miller, Jr., "El, the Creator of Earth," *BASOR* 239 (1980): 43-46.
appear until Gen 1:10, in the plural form *yamim*. As Tsumura points out, if the Hebrew term *ṭhom* came from a Canaanite divine name and was later depersonified, the term would be something like *ṭahom*. There is no evidence that the term *ṭhom* in Gen 1:2 is a depersonification of a Canaanite mythological deity.

3. *Thm in the Old Testament

The term *ṭhom* appears 36 times in the OT, 22 in singular and 14 in plural. This Hebrew term appears without an article in all texts but Isa 63:13 (singular) and Ps 106:9 (plural). *Ṭhom* always means a flood of water or ocean (abyss); there is no type of personification. The word appears in a context of creation” with no mythical reference. The word is used to designate a phenomenon of nature. Many times ṭhom is parallel to *mayim* "water" or *yam* "sea.

*Ṭhom* also means "deep waters, depth" as in Ps 107:26: "They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths." Translated as "depth" it acquires in some contexts the meaning of "abyss or depth" that threatens human existence.

The depth of the ocean is also presented as bottomless. Thus, *ṭhom* is conceived in some texts as a source of blessing. The texts that consider *ṭhom* a source of blessing make it impossible to believe that the basic

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61Tsumura, 62, 65.
62See A. Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Old Testament* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer,1990),1219-1220. The 22 texts in singular are: Gen 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; 49:25; Deut 33:13; Job 28:14; 38:16, 30; 41:24; Pss 36:7; 42:8 (2x); 104:6; Prov 8:27, 28; Isa 51:10; Ezek 26:19; 31:4, 15; Amos 7:4; Jonah 2:6; Hab 3:10.
64Job 38:16; Pss 33:7; 104:6; Prov 3:30; 8:24, 27-28.
65Westermann, 105.
66Job 38:30: "when the waters become hard as stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen?"; ṭhom is, in this instance, the mass of water that freezes due to intense cold.
67Exod 15:8; Ps 77:17; Ezek 26:19; 31:4; Jonah 2:6; Hab 3:10.
69Exod 15:5; Neh 9:11; Job 41:23; Pss 68:23; 69:3, 16; 88:7; 107:24; Jonah 2:4; Mic 7:19; Zech 1:8; 10:11; "marine depth" Isa 44:27; "depths" Pss 69:3, 15; 130:1; Isa 51:10; Ezek 27:34. Ṭhom has this meaning in the song of the Sea in Exod 15:5, where the destruction of the Egyptians is described: "the deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone."
70Gen 49:25: "blessings of the deep that lies below"; Deut 8:7; 33:13; Ps 78:15; Ezek 31:4.
meaning of the Hebrew term is a "hostile mythical power." In some texts, *tehom* refers to "subterranean water," as in Deut 8:7: "a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills." This is a description of the land of Canaan being watered by fountains and springs fed by subterranean waters. We find a similar picture of *tehom* in Ezek 31:4: "The waters nourished it, deep springs made it grow tall; their streams flowed all around its base and sent their channels to all the trees of the field."

The texts generally used to explain the term *tehom* are Gen 1:2 and the verses related to the flood (Gen 7:11; 8:2). Before considering the word in the flood story, it must be noted that H. Gunkel had a powerful influence on the exegesis of these verses through his *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (1895). In that work he derived the term directly from the Babylonian Tiamat, the mythical being and the feminine principle of chaos, thus maintaining a basically mythical meaning. Hasel has rightly pointed out that this direct derivation is unsustainable, for in the OT *tehom* never refers to a mythical figure.

Gen 7:11 notes that *nibq ‘u kkol~ma’y’not tehom rabbah wa’a rubbot hassamayim niptahu*, "all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened." The verb *baq’a* appears here in the Niphal perfect 3 plural common; it means "burst open," "be split, break out," "to split, to break forth," "was cleft, was split, was broken into," "sich spalten, hervorbrechen." This verb frequently appears in the biblical literature in connection with the outflowing or expulsion of water. In Gen 7:11 the phrase refers to the breaking open of the crust of the earth to let subterranean waters flow in unusual quantity. The parallelism in Gen 7:11b is marked by a precise

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71 Jenni and Westermann, 2:1290.
73 BDB, 132.
75 Holladay, 46.
76 Klein, 81. Ugar. *bq’a (= to cleave, to split), Arab. facqa’a (= he knocked out, it burst, exploded), ba’aja (= it cleft, split).*
77 KBS, 143.
79 Hasel, 70.
chiastic structure. In short, when considering the Hebrew terminology and the literary structure of Gen 7:11b, it is evident that the bursting forth of the waters from the springs of the "great deep" refers to the splitting open of springs of subterranean waters.

The Hebrew of Gen 8:2 is similar to that of Gen 7:11b in terminology, structure, and meaning. The two Niphal verbs in 8:2 (wayyissak'ru "had been closed" and wayyikkale' "had been kept back") indicate the end of the impact of the waters on the earth; in the chiasm they correspond to each other both grammatically, with the two Niphal verbs of Gen 7:11b (nibq' 'u "burst forth" and niptahu "were opened"), and semantically, with the inversion of the phenomenon that begins with the flood in Gen 7:11b (nibq' 'u, a "burst forth" and niptahu "were opened") and ends in Gen 8:2 (wayyissak'ru "had been closed" and wayyikkale' "had been kept back"). The quadruple use of the verb in passive voice

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80 A nibqe' 'u burst forth
B kkol~ma 'y'not tehom rabbah all the springs of the great deep
B' wa 'rubbot hassamayimim and the floodgates of the heavens
A' niptahu were opened

The chiastic structure A:B:B':A' indicates that the waters below the surface of the earth flowed (were expelled) in the same way that the waters on the earth fell (were thrown). In B: B' there is a pair of words which are common parallels in biblical literature, tehom // hassamayim (Gen 49:25; Deut 33:13; Ps 107:26; Prov 8:27). But above all there is phonological, grammatical, and semantic equivalence between nibgqe' // niptahu (Job 32:19; Num 16:31b-32a; Isa 41:18), rabbah // rubbot (see J. S. Kselman, "A Note on Gen 7:11," CBQ 35 (1973): 491-493); and between, nibqe' ukkol~ma'yenot tehom rabbah // wa 'rubbot hassamayimim niptahu, verb +subject \ subject +verb (\ antithetical parallelism). See also A. Berlin, The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 107.

81 Hasel, 71.

82 "Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky."

A wayyissak'ru now had been closed
B ma 'y'not tehom the springs of the deep
B' wa 'rubbot hassamayimim and the floodgates of the heavens
A' wayyikkale' had been kept back

The verb "had been closed" corresponds to "had been kept back" (A:A'); "the springs of the deep" correspond to "the floodgates of the heavens" (B:B'). The chiastic parallelism indicates that the waters below the surface of the earth stopped flowing (being expelled) just as the waters on the earth stopped falling (being thrown). The same pair of parallel words appears as in Gen 7:11b tehom // hassamayim. Above all there is a phonological, grammatical, and semantic equivalence between wayyissak'ru // wayyikkale' and between ma 'y'not tehom // wa 'rubbot hassamayimim wayyikkale'. See also J. S. Kselman, "A Note on Gen 7:11," CBQ 35 (1973): 491-493.

83 Hamilton, 300.
indicates clearly that the flood was not a caprice of nature, but that both its beginning and end were divinely ordered and controlled. The Hebrew terminology and literary structure of Gen 8:2 give it a meaning similar to that of Gen 7:11b: the splitting, open of springs of subterranean waters is envisaged.

Thus, not even here is tehom used in a mythical sense. The word designates subterranean water that breaks the surface of the earth, thus producing the catastrophe. In a similar way, modern scholarship understands the use of the term in Gen 1:2 is widely understood as "ocean, abyss, deep waters," therefore, as purely physical. Tehom is matter; it has no personality or autonomy; it is not an opposing or turbulent power. There is no evidence of demythologization of a mythical concept of tehom. Jenni and Westermann conclude their discussion of tehom by pointing out that "if one wishes to establish the theological meaning of tehom, one must conclude that tehom in the OT does not refer to a power hostile to God as was formerly believed, is not personified, and has no mythical function. 88

4. *Thm in Ancient Near Eastern Literature

The Ugaritic term equivalent to the Hebrew term tehom is thm which appears in Ugaritic literature in parallel with ym. It also appears in the dual form thmtm, "the two abysses," and in the plural form thmt. The basic meaning is the same as in Hebrew, "ocean, abyss.

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84 Ibid
85 Hasel, 71.
86 See also Jenni and Westermann, 2:129 1.
90 Gordon, 497. See also S. Segert, A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 203. Segert points out that the meaning of the dual thmtm is "(primeval) Ocean, Deep."
Thm appears in the cycle of "Shachar and Shalim and the Gracious Gods" (Ugaritic text 23:30). The parallel use of ym and thm is evident.

[30] [il . ys] i . gp ym [El went out] to the shore of the sea
wysgd. gp. thm and advanced to the shore of the ocean. 
Del Olmo Lete points out that the Ugaritic thm is a cognate of the Hebrew ēhom and translates the word as "oceano." 

The plural thmt appears twice. Line 3 c 22 of "The Palace of Baal" reads:

[22] thmt. ‘mn. kbbbm of the oceans to the stars. 
The other example appears in the cycle of Aqhat (17 VI 12)-
[12] [ ] mh g’t. thmt. brq [ ] the ocean(s) the lightning.
The dual thmtm is found in the cycle of "The Palace of Baal" (4 IV 22)

[22] qrb. apq. thmtm amid the springs of the two oceans. 
It also appears in the cycle of Aqhat (Ugaritic text 19 45):

[45] bl. sr’. thmtm without watering by the two deeps.

Other ANE languages use forms of the thm root to describe a large body of water. The Akkadian ti’amtum or tamatum also means "sea" or "ocean" in the earliest texts, dated before the Enuma elish. In the Babylonian account of the flood, the Atra-Hasis epic, the expression "the barrier of the sea" (nahbala tiamtim) appears 6 times. In turn, tiamta "sea" is used in parallel to naram "river," with a common meaning for both.

92 G. Del Olmo Lete, Mitos y Leyendas de Canaan (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1981), 443. In this he agrees with Gibson, 159; cf. Del Olmo Lete, 635. In his study, this author notes also the occurrences of the plural thmt and the dual thmtm.
93 Gibson, 49.
94 Ibid, 108.
95 Ibid., 59.
96 Ibid, 115.
97 D. T. Tsumura, The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2, JSOT Supplement Series 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 55. Tsumura quotes the example from an ancient Akkadian text in which the term tiamtim is used in its common meaning "sea, ocean":

Lagaski atima tiamtim in’ar (SAG.GIS.RA) he vanquished Lagas as far as the sea
kakki (cw TUKUL-gi)-su in tiamtim imassi He washed his weapons in the sea.
98 Ibid.
In Eblaite ti-'a-ma-tum commonly means "sea" or "ocean." The evidence indicates that the Ugaritic term thm is a cognate of Hebrew term tí'hom and both mean "ocean." In addition, cognate words from other ANE languages have the same meaning and come from a common root, *thm.100

Conclusion

In conclusion, both the OT and the Ancient Near Eastern Literature indicate that the term tí'hom in Gen 1:2 must be interpreted as a lifeless part of the cosmos, a part of the created world, a purely physical concept. Tí'hom is matter; it has no personality or autonomy and it is not an antagonistic and turbulent power. The "ocean/abyss" opposes no resistance to God's creating activity.101 Certainly there is no evidence that the term tí'hom, as used in Gen 1:2, refers at all to a conflict between a monster of the chaos and a creator-god.102

There is no evidence of a mythical concept in tí'hom. Therefore, it is impossible to speak about a demythification of a mythical being in Gen 1:2. The author of Genesis 1 applies this term in a nonmythical and depersonified way.

The Hebrew term tí'hom in Gen 1:2 has an antimythical function, to oppose the mythical cosmologies of the peoples of the ANE. This antimythical function is confirmed by the clause in Gen 1:2c, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." Here there is no fighting, battle, or conflict. The presence of the Deity moves quietly and controls the "waters," the "ocean, abyss" to show his power over the recently created elements of nature. This interpretation is further confirmed in the following verses, particularly in Gen 1:6-10 where God "separates water from water" (v. 6); then says, "let the water under the sky be gathered" (v. 9); and calls the "gathered waters" by the name "seas"(v. 10). The whole process concludes in v.10: "and God saw that it was good." All that God does on the surface of the waters and the ocean is good. These two elements are lifeless; they do not offer resistance or conflict to his creative powers.

99 Ibid., 56.

100 Huehnergard points out that the form or root thm would be /tahamatu/ "the deep." J. Huehnergard, Ugaritic Vocabulary in Syllabic Transcription, HSS 32 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987). Huehnergard shows the relation of thm and the Sumerian: [AN-tu₄] = Hurrian: [a]-[t]e-a-ni-wi = Ugaritic: ta-a-ma-tu, (184-185).


fiat; they respond to his words, orders, acts, and organization with absolute submission. All this is contrary to what happens in the mythologies of the ANE, where creation is characterized by conflict or battle between powers (or gods) of nature.

In short, the description of tehom in Gen 1:2 does not derive from the influence of any Ancient Near Eastern mythology but it is based on the Hebrew conception of the world which explicitly rejects the mythological notions of surrounding nations.103

103 Stadelmann agrees: "The subsequent acts of creating the heavenly bodies manifest the same antmythical view as we have noted in the cosmological presuppositions of the Priestly writer" (17). On the distinction between the Hebrew conception of the world and that of other peoples of the ANE, see ibid., 178ff.

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THE EARTH OF GENESIS 1:2
ABITOIC OR CHAOTIC?
PART III

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Introduction

As the third and final part of the study of Gen 1:2,¹ this article seeks to analyze the impact of the phrase ruah ʿelohim merahepet al pene hammayim on the question of the state of the earth as depicted in this verse. Gunkel, along with other scholars after him, assumed that ruah ʿelohim refers to winds that Marduk sends against Tiamat.² Others have postulated that this phrase refers to divine creative activity. To reach my conclusion, I will analyze the phrase and its use in the Hebrew Bible and in languages cognate to Hebrew.

Etymology of ruah ʿelohim

The Hebrew expression ruah ʿelohim is commonly translated in English Bibles as "Spirit of God" (KJV, NASB, RSV, NIV). In the Greek LXX the phrase is translated as πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion use the same translation. The Vulgate coincides, translating spiritus Dei ferebatur.

The term ruah appears in the OT 378 times in Hebrew, generally in feminine, and eleven times in Aramaic (only in Daniel).³ The basic meaning of ruah is "wind [something that is in motion and has the power to set other things in motion] and breath."⁴ Holladay translates "spirit of God," whereas Klein allows for "breath, wind, wind.

² H. Gunkel, Schopfung and Chaos in Urzeit and Endzeit (1895); see notes in first article of the series.
⁴ Ibid., 2:917; see also TWOT, 2:836-837.
spirit." KBS has "Der Geist Gottes'; als Wiedergaben sind möglich: a) der Geist Gottes schwebte, b) der/ein machtiger Wind (= Sturm) wehte, c) der/ein Gotteswind (= Gottessturm) wehte; b) und c) sind dabei nicht streng zu scheiden." Schokel translates: "aliento, halito, aliento vital, respiracion, resuello, soplo, resoplido, . . . aliento de Dios." It is evident that the word ruah can mean both spirit and wind.

Western Semitic languages contain words cognate to the Heb ruah: the Ugaritic rh, "wind, aroma"; the Aramaic rwh, "wind, spirit"; and the Arabic ruh, "vital breath"; and rih, "wind." The word is absent in the Eastern Semitic; for instance, in Akkadian saru is used for "wind, breath." Jastrow observes that in the Targumim, Talmudic, and Midrashic literature ruah is interpreted as "spirit, soul; the holy spirit, prophetic inspiration, intuition."

**Ruah "elohim in the OT**

The phrase ruah "elohim appears sixteen times in Hebrew and five times in Aramaic. Its natural meaning would be spirit or wind of Elohim.

The term "elohim is the usual Hebrew word for "God"; however, J.M.P. Smith has suggested that it may also function as a superlative meaning "strong," "powerful," "terrible," or "stormy." However, as D. W. Thomas remarks, it is difficult or even impossible to find OT examples of the use of the divine name only as an epithet of intensity.

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G. J. Wenham clearly affirms that reducing *elohim to merely a superlative seems improbable since in other biblical texts the word always means "God." Moreover, there is no other example in the OT in which the expression *ruah 'elohim means "strong or powerful wind"; in fact, it always refers to God's Spirit or Wind."

Contemporary scholars are divided between two basic interpretations of *ruah 'elohim. One understanding is that *ruah 'elohim refers to the Creator of the Universe, to the Deity's presence and activity." The second holds that *ruah 'elohim refers to an element sent by God, as part of the description of the chaos.15 In a similar vein, E. A. Speiser translates:


"an awesome wind sweeping over the water."\(^{16}\)

The suggestion that *ruah* should be interpreted in Gen 1:2 as "wind" appears already in the *Tg. Onq.*: "And the wind from the Lord was blowing over the surface of the waters." However, this translation is not found in the *Tg. Ps.-J.* and *Tg. Yer.* McClellan finds the translation "wind" supported by Rabbinic literature originally attributed to Rabbis Ibn Ezra and Saadiah.\(^{17}\) However, Cassuto rejects this interpretation as inappropriate to the text.\(^{18}\)

H. M. Orlinsky defends the translation "wind" in Gen 1:2c by affirming that the biblical version of the creation derives to a great extent from the Mesopotamian creation stories in which wind has an important role.\(^{19}\) In the *Enuma elish*, Anu begets the four winds, which are associated with Tiamat and created earlier than the universe (I:105, 106). When Marduk resolves to destroy Tiamat, the four winds help him: "The south wind, the north wind, the east wind, (and) the west wind" (IV: 3). Then *Imhullu* is created: "the evil wind, the whirlwind, the hurricane" (lines IV: 45, 46).\(^{20}\) Later Marduk sets the evil wind free and leads it to the mouth of Tiamat (IV: 96-99). The north wind, then, helps to carry the remains of Tiamat to "out-of-the-way places" (IV: 132). This account deals with a theme totally different from the one found in Gen 1:2; therefore, the mention of the winds in the *Enuma elish* does not truly support the translation "God's winds" in Gen 1:2.\(^{21}\)

In the same article Orlinsky also appeals to Rabbi Judah (third century A.D.), who affirms that on the first day of Creation ten elements were created. Among these were *rwh wmym*, translated as "wind and water." As Young points out, if this translation is correct, it simply shows ancient Hebrew exegetical use.\(^{22}\)

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\(^{17}\) McClellan, 518.

\(^{18}\) Cassuto, 24.


\(^{21}\) Young, 41.

\(^{22}\) Ibid.; for an analysis of the inconsistency in Orlinsky's arguments, see Hamilton, 112-114.
Contrary to Orlinsky's proposal, 34 of the 35 times that ‘elohim appears in the Gen 1 Creation account, it refers undoubtedly to the Deity.23 Moreover, in Gen 1:1 and 1:3, which are the immediate context of 1:2, ‘elohim clearly refer to the Creator.24 It would be difficult to accept that Gen 1:2 does not refer to divinity, especially when the Hebrew has numerous other clear ways to describe a powerful wind or a heavy storm.25 In addition, when ruah appears in the Hebrew genitive construction with ‘elohim (or YHWH) it always refers to some activity or aspect of the deity.26 As Moscati indicates, ‘elohim in Gen 1:2c has a personal meaning, and the attempt to exclude God from this important stage of the Creation fails completely.27

Recently DeRoche suggested that the use of ruah, "wind," in Gen 8:1 and Exod 14:21 "leads to the division within the bodies of water, and consequently, the appearance of dry land"; therefore, "the ruah ‘elohim, "wind or spirit of God" of Gen 1:2, "must also be a reference to the creative activity of the deity."28 DeRoche concludes:

The ruah ‘elohim of Gen 1:2c refers to the impending creative activity of the deity. It is neither part of the description of chaos, nor does it refer to a wind sent by Elohim, if by wind is meant the meteorological phenomenon of moving air. It expresses Elohim's control over the cosmos and his ability to impose his will upon it. As part of v. 2 it is part of the description of the way things were before Elohim executes any specific act of creation.29

Nicolas Wyatt, in a recent article about the darkness in Gen 1:2, concluded his exegetical study by pointing out that the logical structure of the verse implies the initial stages in the manifestation of the deity; it is an unusual account of a theophany. In this way, according to Wyatt, Gen 1:2 refers to God's invisibility in the context of a primeval cosmogony.30

24 Ibid, 318; emphasis added.
25 DeRoche, 314-315.
26 Ibid, 318; emphasis added.
Finally, the concept "wind of God" becomes unsustainable when the rest of Gen 1 is considered. Sarna points out that "wind" has no function in the rest of the story." The uninhabited and empty earth is covered by vegetation, animals, and human life. Darkness is separated from light under the regulation of the luminaries. Throughout Gen 1 there is a clear development of the elements that appear in Gen 1:2.

Merahepet in Gen 1:2

Biblical Use of merahepet

Merahepet is a Pi'el feminine singular participle of the verb rahap, "hover" (BDB); "hover, fly, flutter"32; "Zitternd schweben" (KBS). In addition, the Targumic, Talmudic, and Midrashic literature interpret mrahp as "to move, hover, flutter."33 This meaning is supported by the Ugaritic in which eagles are pictured as hovering over their prey, ready to dart down upon it.34

Deut 32:11 uses this verb, also in the Pi'el. Here the Lord is pictured as leading Israel, "like an eagle [Heb נַשָּׁה / Ugaritic nsr] that stirs up its nest, that flutters [rahap] over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions" (RSV) The verb describes the actions of the mother eagle after the young are out of the nest or, when they are compelled to leave the nest. In this text merahepet can only be construed as hovering or fluttering and cannot describe the action of a "mighty wind."35 Following this analogy, ruah əlōhim in Gen 1:2 is described as a living being who hovers like a bird over the created earth.36

31 Sarna, Genesis, 6.
32 Klein, 614.
33 Jastrow, 1468.
34 Young, 36, n. 36.
35 Ibid. Other scholars who agree with this interpretation are Hamilton, 115; McClellan, 526-527; Ross, 107; Wenham, 1:17; and Westermann, 107. T. Friedman points out that the interpretation of ruah əlōhim in Gen 1:2 as "strong wind" is inappropriate for this text because both in the biblical and Ugaritic texts the root *rhp describes the actions of birds (living beings) and not the actions of the winds (inanimate phenomena); see his "W ruah əlōhim merahepet al-pene hammayim [Gen 1:2]," Beth Mikra 25 [1980]: 309-312.
36 Young, 37.
Rhp in Ugaritic Literature
The Ugaritic term equivalent to the Heb rahap is the verb rhp.37 In Ugaritic texts this verb is always associated with eagles.38 While C. H. Gordon suggests the meaning "to soar" for the Ugaritic rhp,39 Gibson prefers the verb "hover" in his translation of two sections of the Epic of Aqhat.

[Above him] eagles shall hover, [a flock] of hawks look down.
Among the eagles I myself will hover.40

Del Olmo Lete points out, just as Gibson does, that the Ugaritic rhp is a cognate of Heb rahap.41

In conclusion, the use of rhp in the Ugaritic literature agrees with the idea that this is an activity carried out by a living being. Thus the appropriate translation of Gen 1:2c is "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." To complete the analysis of the verse, its place within its context must be studied.

Gen 1:2 in the Context of Gen 1

The interpretation of Gen 1:2 perfectly fits the literary structure of the chapter. In v. 2 the author does not turn his attention to the "heavens," but to the earth, where his audience is, and presents "the earth"--the familiar earth with vegetation, animals, and human beings--as not yet existing. Therefore, both the third (vegetation) and the sixth (animal and human life) days of Creation are the climax of the literary structure of the Creation account, while its zenith is reached with the creation of human beings on the sixth day.42

38 See Hamilton, 115.
39 UT 484. See also S. Segert, A Basic Grammar of the Ugaritic Language (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 201.
41 Del Olimo Lete literally says: rhp: v.D., "revolotear" // bsr (hb. rahep) (MLC, 624); cf. Gibson, "hovered, soared" (CML, 158).
Gen 1:2 shows the earth as unproductive and uninhabited (tohu wabohu) within the literary structure of Gen 1.43

| DAY 1 | light and darkness | DAY 4 | "sun" and "moon"
|---|---|---|---|
| DAY 2 | two waters | DAY 5 | fish and birds
| DAY 3 | earth and seas | DAY 6 | animals and man

vegetation on the earth

The earth became productive when God said, tadse’ ha’ares dese’ ("let the land produce vegetation," v. 11) on the third day. The "empty" earth, i.e., "yet uninhabited" became inhabited when God said watose’ ha’ares nepes hayya ("let the land produce living creatures," v. 24) and na’aseh ‘adam besalmenu kidmutenu ("let us make man in our image, in our likeness," v. 26). Therefore, the "unproductive and empty/uninhabited" earth became productive, with vegetation, animals, and man created by God's fiat. The Gen 1 creation account affirms that God created human beings "in his image" and provided an inhabitable and productive earth for them.44

**Conclusion**

This analysis of the Heb of Gen 1:2 has sought to find answers to difficult questions. Does Gen 1:2 describe a watery chaos that existed before the Creation? Is there a direct relationship between Gen 1:2 and the mythology called Chaoskampf? Do tobu wabohu, tehom and ruah 'elohim in Gen 1:2 suggest a chaotic state or an abiotic state of the earth?

Our study of the OT and ANE literature has found that Gen 1:2 must be interpreted as the description of the earth as it was without vegetation and uninhabited by animals and humans. The concept that appears in Gen 1:2 is an abiotic concept of the earth, with vegetable, animal, and human life appearing in the following verses.

Additional support for the abiotic state of the earth is found in the parallel between Gen 1:2 and 2:5, which is generally admitted.45

Gen 1:2: "The earth was formless and empty" //
Gen 2:5: "No shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for ... there was no man to work the ground."

Gen 1:2 provides the background for the development of the narration,


44 Tsumura, 42-43.

which shows the earth full of life and inhabitants (Gen 1:11-12, 20, 24, 26).46

The earth is not described as being in a chaotic state after a previous destruction, but as being barren and not yet developed. In addition to showing the initial state of creation, the verse presents God as author of life, without whom there can be no life. Life is present only in God's Spirit; the elements of the earth are lifeless and awaiting the Spirit's command. Here God's Spirit is about to create life, to change an abiotic state to a biotic state of vegetable, animal, and human life through the divine fiat.

The objective of this research was to discover if Gen 1:2 contains evidence of the existence of a mythological battle (Chaoskampf) between the creator-god and the powers of the chaos, such as Gunkel and others have suggested. This is an important question, for if Gunkel's presuppositions are true, "it is also no longer allowable in principle to reject the possibility that the whole chapter might be a myth that has been transformed into narrative."47

On the contrary, if there is no linguistic and biblical foundation for the assumption, it is more difficult to insist that the Genesis account is a myth such as those of ANE literature.

In conclusion, it is of utmost importance to reiterate the differences between the Hebrew cosmology and the Mesopotamian cosmogony. Sarna explains: "The Hebrew cosmology represents a revolutionary break with the contemporary world, a parting of the spiritual ways that involved the undermining of the entire prevailing mythological world-view. These new ideas of Israel transcended, by far, the range of the religious concepts of the ancient world."48 Sarna found that "the supreme characteristic of the Mesopotamian cosmogony" was "that it is embedded in a mythological matrix. On the other hand, the outstanding peculiarity of the biblical account is the complete absence of mythology in the classical pagan sense of the term. ... Nowhere is this non-mythological outlook better illustrated than in the Genesis narrative. The Hebrew account is matchless in its solemn and majestic simplicity.... The clear line of demarcation between God and His creation was never violated. Nowhere is this brought out more forcefully than in the Hebrew Genesis account."49

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49 Ibid., 9-11, emphasis added.

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ARE THE DAYS OF GENESIS LONGER THAN 24 HOURS?
THE BIBLE SAYS, "YES!"

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ISBN 0-944788-40-8

I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

So reads the first statement of the Apostles's Creed. This declaration basically restates the first verse of the Bible, and it is universally accepted by Christians. Nevertheless, whereas Christians uniformly agree to the fact of God as creator, they disagree on the length of time God took to create and mold the universe into its present form. Some Christians hold that God took six literal days to accomplish this task, while others are convinced that God used processes that spanned millions and billions of years.

Why the difference of opinion? The answer is that ample evidence exists, both scientific and biblical, that raises questions about a literal six day creation period. I will not discuss the scientific evidence. After all, regardless of scientific opinion, if the Bible is clear that creation occurred in six literal days, then we would be required as Bible believers to accept this verdict. There are, however, abundant biblical data indicating that the Bible does not require belief in a literal creation week. This evidence comes from the usage of the terms "day," "morning," and "evening," and from the events that occurred during day six.

Usage of the Terms "Day," "Morning," and "Evening"

In Hebrew (the language of most of the Old Testament), as in English, a single word can have several meanings. The Hebrew word "day" can mean a period of daylight as opposed to night (Genesis 1.5,14), a twenty-four hour period (many examples), and a period of time of unspecified length. The last usage, which is figurative, occurs many times in the Old Testament. An example appears in the creation account itself: "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord made the earth and the heavens" (Genesis 2.4). As we can see from this verse, regardless of the meaning of "day" in Genesis chapter one, scripture uses "day" for the entire week of creation, thereby illustrating the figurative meaning of the word.
At first, this may seem strange, for English speakers do not often use "day" figuratively. It does, nevertheless, appear at times in expressions like "back in my day," "in this day and age," and "in the days of FDR." It should be noted that the plural form "days" occurs figuratively numerous times in Hebrew. In fact, consulting a concordance will show that about a quarter of all the uses of "day" and "days" are figurative. Hence there is no doubt that "day/days" can denote a period of time longer than twenty-four hours.

On the other hand, what about the terms "morning" and "evening"? Does not their use in conjunction with "day" strengthen the literal interpretation of "day?" The answer is "no," because Hebrew also uses "morning" and "evening" figuratively. For example, we read in Psalm 90, attributed to Moses, that human beings are like the grass that "though in the morning it springs up new, by evening it is dry and withered" (verse 6). I know of no grass that literally springs up in the morning and then is dead by the same evening. Rather, the psalmist has in mind the life cycle of grass in the Levant, which begins its growth with the November rains and dies with the hot, dry, March, desert winds. In this psalm, therefore, "morning" stands for the period of growth and "evening" stands for the period of death. This interpretation fits in with the tenor of the entire psalm which encourages humans to be mindful of their time on earth; for just as the life cycle of grass is short with respect to human life, human life itself is short with respect to the ongoing activities of God. The same comparison is made between humans and grass in Isaiah 40.6-8 and 1 Peter 1.24,25.

"Morning" and "evening" are also used figuratively in Psalm 30.5. In this verse we read that God's anger "lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night [literally: evening], but rejoicing comes in the morning." In context, "evening" corresponds to the time of weeping over God's anger, and "morning" corresponds to the time of rejoicing over God's favor. The writer envisions a time longer than a literal morning or evening.

Finally, we read in Psalm 49.14,15 that the wicked are

like sheep ... destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave far from their princely mansions. But God will redeem my soul from the grave; he will surely take me to himself.

Again, "morning" must be interpreted figuratively, for in what way can the upright literally rule over the dead the morning after they die? After all, one rules over those who are alive, not over those who are dead. I would suggest that the psalmist is looking ahead to the time of his ultimate redemption -- his resurrection -- spoken of in verse 15. In short, he is looking forward to a new age that he calls "morning."

As with the word "day," English speakers do not regularly use "morning" and "evening" figuratively, but perhaps the expressions "the dawning of a new age" and "in the twilight of his/her years" parallel the Hebrew idiom that uses portions of a day figuratively for periods of time.

In summary, we find evidence from the biblical usage of the terms "day," "morning," and "evening" that the "days" of the first chapter of Genesis may not be literal. If not, then what do the terms mean? I would suggest the following: "Evening" represents the waning
of one "day's" creative activity and "morning" represents the beginning of the next "day's" creative activity. This activity has taken place in a period of time called a "day."

The argument for figurative days will be reinforced when we consider the events that occurred on the sixth day.

**The Events of the Sixth Day**

In Genesis 1.27 it appears that man and woman were created at the same time, but in Genesis chapter two we learn that a period of time elapsed between the creation of the man and that of the woman. This is not a contradiction. Chapter one only gives an overview of the creation of human beings, whereas chapter two fills in the details. Let us examine each detail while asking ourselves if all the events presented in chapter two could reasonably fit into twenty-four hours.

First, after Adam was created, God planted the garden of Eden in the east. He then made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground. At this point we have to pay very careful attention to the terminology describing God's activities. Notice that we are not told that God "created" the garden or the trees. Rather, God "planted" and "caused the trees to grow." The terms "planted" and "grow" imply activity that took time. Of course, God has the power to create Eden in an instant, but the language of the narrative suggests a process, not an immediate creative act.

Second, in spite of the garden's perfection, it could not take care of itself; man still needed "to work it and to take care of it." (verse 15) The nature of the work is not stated, but one wonders why the garden needed any work at all if the sixth day was only twenty-four hours. Could not the garden take care of itself for such a short period? Again, the narrative implies a time longer than a literal day, unless the command was given at this time but was meant to be fulfilled at a later date. The perception is, however, that Adam was to begin his work forthwith.

Third, in verse 18 the Lord declares that "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." The Lord, however, did not create Eve immediately. Instead, he brought the beasts of the field and the birds of the air to Adam to name them, which he did. This naming process would have taken time, both because there were many kinds of animals, and because names in the Bible describe a characteristic of the object being named. Note, for example, that the name "woman" is not arbitrary; it brings out a characteristic of woman -- "she was taken out of man." (verse 23) Note also the meanings of "Cain" and "Seth" in Genesis 4.1,25. From these and other scriptural examples, it is not unreasonable that Adam's name for each animal would have expressed a characteristic of the animal, and this implies that Adam would have had to observe each animal for a while in order to select a name that summarized one of its characteristics. Thus it is hard to believe that Adam could have named all the beasts of the field and the birds of the air in twenty-four hours.

Of course, one wonders why the Lord had Adam name the animals before He created the woman. I would suggest that God's purpose was to show Adam that he was incomplete without a mate (after all, the other animals had mates); in this way he would love and appreciate Eve all the more.
The final evidence that the sixth day was longer than twenty-four hours comes from Adam's expression after he sees Eve: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." The English translation "this is now" misses the emphasis which belongs to the word used in the original Hebrew. A better rendering would be "now at length" or "now at last," as we can see by tracing the use of this word in other portions of the Old Testament.

**Uses of "This is now":**

1. *Genesis 18.32:* As Abraham argues with the Lord about the impending destruction of Sodom, he ends the long bargaining session by asking the Lord not to be angry "this time," or "now at last," when he requests that Sodom not be destroyed if only ten righteous individuals are found within the city.

2. *Genesis 29.34,35:* Leah uses this expression after the birth of her sons Levi and Judah. Recall that Leah was not loved by Jacob, but she felt that now she would be loved after giving birth to these two sons.

3. *Genesis 30.20:* Again, the expression is used by Leah after the birth of Zebulun.
4. *Genesis 46.30:* For many years Israel (Jacob) thought that his beloved son Joseph was dead, but finally he learns that Joseph was alive in Egypt. Upon seeing his son, Israel states, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive." The word "now" is the same word used by Adam in Genesis 2.23.

5. *Exodus 9.27:* After the seventh plague, Pharaoh urges Moses to end the plague by declaring, "This time I have sinned." The expression "this time" is the same word used in Genesis 2.23.

6. *Exodus 10.17:* Again, after the eighth plague, Pharaoh tries the same tactic as before.

7. *Judges 6.39:* Our expression is used twice by Gideon when requesting that "now at last" the Lord not be angry with him for asking that the dew avoid the fleece and condense on the ground.

8. *Judges 15.3:* Samson had experienced a time of contention with the Philistines which ended in his leaving his wife with her father and returning to the land of Israel. Some time later, Samson returned to his wife's house only to find that she was given to another man. Samson responds by declaring that "this time," or "now at last" he has a right to get even with the Philistines.

9. *Judges 16.18:* Samson finally succumbs to Delilah's enticements and he confesses to her the source of his strength. Delilah calls the Philistine leaders to come "this time," for he told her everything.

10. *Judges 16.28:* After Samson was taken to the temple to be mocked by the Philistines, he asks God "now at last" to give him the strength to bring down the temple.
In each instance above, except for Abraham and Gideon, the narrative relates a series of events that lasted longer than twenty-four hours. In some cases, a considerable period of time elapsed. That is why the term is better translated "now at last." It is difficult, therefore, to believe that Adam would use this expression if only a fraction of a day passed between his creation and that of Eve's. Unlike Abraham or Gideon, Adam was neither arguing with God nor seeking a sign; his use of "now at last" parallels those which involve a longer period of time. In Adam's case, this period included the naming of the animals and the recognition that he was incomplete without a mate. Surely these events took longer than a day. And if the sixth day was not a twenty-four hour period, what right do we have to insist that any other day of creation was twenty-four hours?

We have seen two powerful evidences that the "days" of Genesis are figurative. First, we have investigated the usage of the terms "day," "morning," and "evening," and we have seen that these terms can be used figuratively. Second, we have examined the terminology used to describe the activities of the sixth day, and we find substantial testimony that the events of the sixth day do not fit into twenty-four hours.

We conclude that scripture itself attests that the "days" of Genesis need not be taken literally.
Appendix: Two Common Arguments against the Non-literal View

One argument often encountered is as follows: In all instances outside of Genesis one, when a number appears with the term "day," a literal day is meant. Because a number appears with the days of Genesis one, they must be literal.

This argument fails on two counts. First, the premise is false. There are at least two instances where a number appears with a figurative use of "day," Isaiah 9.14 (9.13 in Hebrew) and Hosea 6.2. In the Isaiah passage, the expression "one day" is exactly the same in Hebrew as the one often translated as "the first day" in Genesis 1.5. "One day" in this passage, as well as the numbered "days" in Hosea, are clearly figurative.

Second, in all cases purportedly illustrating the number/literal day correlation, it is already apparent from the context that a literal day is intended. The number is simply descriptive; it does not define "day." Hence the proposed connection between the presence of a number and the meaning of "day" does not exist.

A second argument against non-literal days arises from the fourth commandment (Exodus 20.9-11):

Six days you will labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. You will not do any work .... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth ... and rested on the seventh.

A parallel is observed between the literal days of human work and rest and the days of creation. But can we conclude from this that the days of the first chapter of Genesis are literal? The theologian J. Oliver Buswell provides an excellent answer:

If we had no other example of Moses' language, this passage might be taken as evidence for a twenty-four hour creative day, but we have Scriptural evidence that Moses made a radical distinction between God's attitude toward time and the attitude of man. What Moses is saying, in the total Scriptural context, must be understood as teaching that man should observe a periodicity in the ratio of work to rest, of six days to one day, because God in the creation set an example of an analogous periodicity of six and one of his kind of days. Surely the fourth commandment gives no right to say that God's days always must be understood to be of the same length as man's days, when we have so much evidence to the contrary.

The ninetieth Psalm is ascribed to Moses and it is probable that the ascription is correct. In verse four of the Psalm we read, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." It would appear then that Moses himself was accustomed to a figurative use of the word; for a thousand years could equal "yesterday," or "a watch in the night" of three or four hours. Peter brings out the same thought. "This one thing must not be forgotten, beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 2:8).

To the above one might add that it appears as though God's rest on the seventh day is used as a basis for three sabbath principles: rest on the seventh day (Exodus 20.8-11), the seventh year (Leviticus 25.8-17), and the jubilee year, after 7 x 7 = 49 years (Leviticus 25.8-17). It is invalid to pick out just one of these applications of the sabbath principle and apply it to the days of Genesis.
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THE NAMING OF ISAAC:
THE ROLE OF THE WIFE/SISTER EPISODES
IN THE REDACTION OF GENESIS

JOHN RONNING

THE patriarchal narratives of Genesis contain three accounts of a patriarch passing his wife off as his sister out of fear for his own life (Gen 12:10-20; 20:1-18; and 26:1-11). For the source critic, this is a classic example of multiple versions of the same original story, demonstrating a multiplicity of sources underlying our present book of Genesis.1 For the OT form critic, they provide a rare opportunity to compare three parallel accounts and postulate an origin and development in the oral and literary tradition.2 For the redaction critic, they present a challenge to explain how the accounts function in their present contexts; i.e., not as variant versions of one event, but as different episodes in the lives of Abraham and Isaac.3


2 The work of K. Koch (The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form Critical Method [New York: Scribner, 1969] 115-28) will be described as an example, though his methods and conclusions have been criticized by other form critics. In particular, the view that the three incidents came to their present form due to changes in one prototype in the process of oral transmission has been challenged by others who see clear evidence of literary dependence. E.g., T. Alexander ("The Wife/Sister Incidents of Genesis: Oral Variants?" IBS 11 [1989] 2-22), building on the more detailed work of P. Weimar (Untersuchungen zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Pentateuch [Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977] 4-111), on J. Van Seters (Abraham in History and Tradition [New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1975] 167-91), and others, concluded, "Unfortunately, in the past, many scholars have jumped too quickly to the assumption that the wife/sister episodes must all relate to one original incident, and that the differences between them are due to the process of oral transmission. . . . The task of reconstructing the oral and redactional history of these accounts is much more involved than is generally acknowledged" (p. 19). For other form critical approaches and bibliographies, see C. Westermann, Genesis 12-36: A Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985) 159-68; G. Coates, Genesis: With an Introduction to Narrative Literature (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 109-13; 149-52; 188-92; D. L. Petersen, "A Thrice-Told Tale: Genre, Theme, and Motif," BR 18 (1973) 30-43.

3 Methods bearing some resemblance to those of redaction criticism can be seen in the works of defenders of the unity of authorship of the book of Genesis. Perhaps the most detailed and comprehensive of these (at least in English) is W. Green, The Unity of the Book of Genesis (New York: Scribner, 1897) 182-85, 250-62, 322-28. Both Van Seters (Abraham, 183-91) and Weimar (Redaktionsgeschichte, 43-55, 75-78, 95-102) discuss the relation of the episodes to their contexts, but their acceptance of the multiple-source hypothesis prevents them from trying to
For ease of reference, K. Koch's annotation will be followed, so that the
three accounts will be A, B, and C, referring to the first, second, and third,
respectively, in the order in which they appear in Genesis. The names
Abraham and Sarah will be used throughout, even when referring to pas-
sages prior to their name change (Genesis 17).

I. Conclusions of Source Criticism

Numerous apparent inconsistencies with the respective narrative con-
texts, as well as the seeming redundancy of the accounts, are explained by
source critics as due to the redaction of three sources containing variants of
one story during the formation of the book of Genesis. Thus in A, where
Sarah's beauty puts Abraham in fear of his life in Egypt-a plausible theme
in the story itself-the overall chronology imposed makes the whole episode
incongruous; for we learn from comparing Gen 17:17 and 12:4 that Sarah
had to have been at least 65 years old! There is a similar chronological
problem in C, where, though we do not know Rebekah's age, she must have
been married for at least 35 years, and therefore presumably not one who
would be looked at as a great marriage prospect. Furthermore, the same
chronology indicates that Jacob and Esau were already born, so how could
the parents feign brother and sister for "a long time"? Worse yet, we have
the same king Abimelech and his general Phicol, who appear also in B, at
least 76 years earlier! The most serious difficulties, however, occur in B.
There, not only does the context require Sarah to be 89 years old (17:11,
17), compounding the same problem as in A and C, but two chapters earlier
Sarah has described herself in terms that are clearly incompatible with the
situation presumed in B. Did she not laugh, saying, "After I have become
old, shall I have pleasure ['ahare beloti hayeta li cedna', my lord being old
also?" (Gen 18: 12)? Is it plausible then, that Abraham should fear for his
solve the apparent contradictions with respect to those contexts. E.g., Van Seters rules out the
possibility that three such episodes as we are considering here could come from one author
( Abraham, 154-55).

4 C takes place after the death of Abraham (26: 18), who died at the age of 175 (25:7). Isaac
married Rebekah when Abraham was 140 (25:20; 21:5), making their marriage 35 years old
when Abraham died, thus a minimum of 35 years old when C takes place.

5 The twins were born when Abraham was 160 (Gen 25:26; cf. n. 4).

6 Abraham would still have been 99 years old in B (17: I; 21:5), and he died 76 years later
(n. 4). It is not plausible to suggest that B is a chronological regression, since it is closely linked
with chap. 21 (20:15; 21:22) and is explicitly linked to the chapters before it (v. 1).

7 Most interpreters view v. 12 as indicating that sexual intimacy was out of the question,
understanding 'edna (a hapax) as sexual pleasure. In my opinion, this needs to be reexamined.
For one thing, it seems to make the connection between Sarah's words and the Lord's rep-
etition of them a bit remote (v. 13 quotes her as scoffing, "shall I give birth?"). A. Millard ("The
Etymology of Eden," VT 24 [1984] 103-6), arguing for the possibility of a West Semitic origin
for 'eden, from a root with "the common idea of 'pleasure, luxury' " (p. 104) as opposed to an
Akkadian derivation with the idea of "steppe, plain," which he finds problematic, cites a
life because of this old woman, or that the king would want to marry her? Furthermore, only a few months may be allowed between chap. 18 and the end of B, or else Sarah would be visibly pregnant with Isaac. But 20:18 seems to require an extended period of time to elapse within B itself in order to notice the infertility of Abimelech's household since the time he took Sarah.

Unfortunately for source analysis, the three accounts cannot be assigned to the three sources of classical Wellhausenism. While B is assigned to E (on the basis of its use of Elohim; vv. 3, 6, 11, 13, 17 [twice]; Yhwh in v. 18 is ascribed to the redactor), and indeed is said to be the first extended narrative of that source,8 both A and C are assigned to separate J sources. C. Westermann summarizes the earlier views on whether A or C was the older of the two, and concludes, "the question can now be considered as settled: Gen. 12 is the earliest of the three variants."9

II. Conclusions of Form Criticism

Form critics accept that the difficulties mentioned above are due to the redaction of different source documents; the casting of individual narratives into contexts originally foreign to them. They concentrate their study on the content and history of the stories themselves, studying the episodes in relation to each other, more than in relation to their respective contexts. Since the focus of this paper is on redaction criticism, I will outline the approach only of Koch as representative.

Koch discusses "The Ancestress of Israel in Danger" under the headings, "Defining the Unit," "Determination of the Literary Type," "Transmission History," "Setting in Life," and "Redaction History." He concludes that they were all originally independent narratives based on the relation to their present contexts. For example, A is felt to be an intrusion on its context, since it is "odd" that Abraham would leave the promised land right after receiving the promise of the land.10 Gen 13:2 is really a continuation of 12:9, with 13:1 being added to compensate for the intrusion. Gen 12:10

mid-ninth-century BC bilingual inscription where the Aramaic uses a verbal form of "dn, which corresponds to the Akkadian mutahhidu, "to enrich, make abundant." This idea of abundance would give a closer parallel to giving birth than would sexual pleasure, since offspring are associated with "fruitfulness" (Gen 1:28, etc.). M. Jastrow cites a later Hebrew verbal usage of the root with the idea of rejuvenation, which would thus provide an opposite to blh, and would have interesting implications for the thesis of this paper (A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, [2 vols.; Brooklyn: Shalom, 1967] 2.1045). Such a usage, however, might seem just as remote from "give birth" as is the concept of sexual pleasure. The NIV ("will I now have this pleasure?") seems to refer the pleasure to the giving birth just promised, i.e., the joys of motherhood.

8 So E. Speiser, Genesis (AB 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964) 150; Skinner, Genesis, 315.


is satisfactory as an introduction to an independent unit, and vv. 19-20 are a
fitting conclusion since "the Hebrew often ends a tale with a speech which is
intended to abate the suspense, and a subsequent short narrative remark
on the future fate of the hero." Similar conclusions are reached for B and
C. The mention of famine was left out of B because "he did not want to
mention it too often." In the introduction of C, a later writer inserted
"beside the previous famine that was in the days of Abraham," as is evident
from the fact that it "has a clumsy ring to it in the Hebrew." What betrays
it as clumsy Koch does not tell us.

As for literary type, Koch assigns the narratives to Gunkel's category
"ethnological saga," in which

The position of the nomadic Abraham and Isaac, including their strikingly beau-
tiful women and their people, is contrasted with the soft, lascivious people of an
established land. . . . In such sagas the predominant fact for the Israelite is that
his God, the God of Israel, has influence on what happens between nations, and
reveals himself as a divine leader.

Various smaller component types are used, such as the simple command
from God (26:2-3a), a divine benediction (26:3b-5), divine communication
in a dream (20:3, 6-7), a lament of a king (20:4-5), etc.

Under "Transmission History" Koch compares the content of the three
narratives and seeks to reconstruct the content of the original story. A is
thought to be the most archaic of the three. What happened to Sarah in
Pharaoh's palace is only hinted at (he assumes she was involved in adul-
tery); "the delicacy of the situation has been least noticed by the writer of
this version." In A, it is not a bad thing that Abraham should induce his
wife to lie. No explanation is given as to how Pharaoh knew the plagues
were because of Abraham's wife-Koch suggests that an account of Pha-
raoh divining the reason by a soothsayer consulting his gods was removed
later. Episode B is supposed to reflect views of a later period. In it, Abraham
is a chosen man of God, a Nabi. Here, he does not lie (thanks to an editor
who obviously inserted the explanation of the half truth in v. 12). The
account has been modified so that Sarah has not been defiled, since v. 9
("you have brought great sin on me") presumes that adultery took place; v.
6 of course is a clumsy later addition to remove the offense. The description
of Sarah's beauty has also been removed since it is contrary to the context.
The chief difference between A and B, however, is in the long conversations
in B. Episode C is scarcely even a story anymore, as it is broken up by

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 117.
13 Ibid., 118.
14 Ibid., 120. D. Petersen calls Koch's assertion that all three stories are the same type
"rather puzzling," and notes that Gunkel himself did not identify them with the "ethnological
saga" type ("A Thrice-Told Tale," 30).
speeches. There is nothing dangerous in the story, no direct threat from the king, no need for divine intervention. "Everything points to a later stage in the development of the saga, where the story has lost its original form."16 The blessing of vv. 3-5 was taken almost word for word from other J passages. As to who the original characters were and the original setting, the conclusion is that the less well known should be the original. Thus, contrary to the rule, C, which is supposed to be the most modified and the latest, retains the original characters and setting, while A, the most archaic, which has no later additions, has undergone modification from Isaac and Rebekah to Abraham and Sarah, and from Abimelech king of Gerar to Pharaoh king of Egypt. The original version is reconstructed as follows:

Because of famine Isaac travelled from the desert in southern Palestine to the nearby Canaanite city of Gerar, to live there as a 'sojourner', i.e. to keep within the pasturage rights on the ground belonging to the city. He told everyone that his wife was his sister so that his life would not be endangered by those who desired her. However, Rebekah's beauty could not pass unnoticed. The king of the city, Abimelech, took Rebekah into his harem, amply compensating Isaac. As a material sin was about to be committed, God struck the people of the palace with a mysterious illness. Through the medium of his gods, or a soothsayer, Abimelech recognized what had happened. Abimelech called Isaac to account: "What is this that you have done to me?" He then restored him his wife and sent him away, loaded with gifts.17

Comparing this reconstruction with the three versions in Genesis, Koch then proposes a "history of the literary type of the ethnological saga." Four points are observed: (1) narratives become elaborated by speeches; (2) moral sensitivity becomes gradually stronger; (3) God's intervention is less tangible in later versions; (4) there is a tendency to transfer the action of the story to more familiar people and powers.18

The setting in life of this original story is said to be the desert of Southern Palestine before the conquest, told by those tracing their descent from Isaac. "Such a story would perhaps have been related by men before the tents, when it was evening, after the herds had been settled and the children slept."19 These people felt themselves superior to those of the city, to whom they sometimes had to turn for permission to graze in hard times. As the story changed, the setting in life changed; Isaac was supplanted by Abraham when the tribe of Judah was formed by the union of Isaac's people with

16 Ibid., 124.
17 Ibid., 126. This appears to contradict his earlier assumption that adultery did occur in the most primitive version.
18 Ibid., 126-27. R. Polzin (" 'The Ancestress of Israel in Danger' in Danger," Semeia 3 [1975] 82) says of Koch, "A particularly circular aspect of his analysis consists in describing the evolutionary development of this particular 'ethnological saga' largely by means of general assumptions about how such stories developed in Israel, . . . and then using this analysis as a basis for tracing 'a history of the literary type of the ethnological saga.'"
Abraham's. Nomads became farmers (see 26:12). Narrative B is taken up by prophetic circles, and becomes a "legend about the prophets." 20

III. Redaction Criticism

1. The Redaction-Critical Procedure

Though Koch's conclusions have been criticized by a number of scholars, some of whom we have cited in the accompanying notes, they have in common with him what seems to be an automatic assumption that the object of study is to find out how the three episodes relate to each other, more than to their differing contexts. Our disagreement is more fundamental. The only relationship that we positively know existed among the three accounts is the one that now exists in the book of Genesis: a literary one, where they are three different episodes in the lives of the patriarchs, separated from each other by many years and considerable narration. Any other relationship among them is, and can only be, hypothetical, and the wide divergence of opinion as to such hypothetical relationships does not give much confidence in the certainty of anyone position. 21 We will attempt to demonstrate here that the critical emphasis on studying the narratives in relation to each other at the expense of their relevance to their respective contexts and to the themes of the patriarchal narratives has obscured the literary genius of the one responsible for giving us the patriarchal narratives in their present form. Our procedure was well described by Van Seters, who did not carry it out to its logical conclusion because of his acceptance of source criticism:

The stories about the patriarch's beautiful wife in a foreign land should not be treated in isolation from other episodes connected with the same dramatis personae. The reason for many doing so in the past is the presupposition that the stories in Genesis are virtually all based directly on specific folktales and were put into their present form by narrators working quite independently of each other. Since such a proposition has been rejected in this study there is every reason why they should be treated together. 22

To begin, we will focus on some of the difficulties mentioned by source critics and ask the question, "What would a reader presuming the unity and integrity of Genesis 12-26 conclude?" One difficulty that has been ade-

20 Ibid., 128.
21 Alexander lists 24 different possibilities for the dependence (or lack thereof) among the three narratives ("The Wife/Sister Incidents," 2-3), enough to keep scholars occupied for several more centuries.
22 Van Seters, Abraham, 183-84.
quately dealt with in the past is the age of Sarah in A.23 She is at least 65
years old, yet she is so attractive that she is taken into the harem of Pharaoh
himself. This attractiveness is certainly remarkable—but why is it felt to be
problematic? Why should we exclude the possibility that the placement of
this account in its chronological framework is intended to convey mean-
ing—that from it we are to understand that Sarah, "our ancestress," was
indeed remarkable not only for her beauty, but for the prolonging of her
beauty? The lives of the patriarchs were long; would this fact not make
probable a delay in the aging process, a lengthening of the time of youthful
beauty? And such a prolongation of life would remind readers that God had
made provision for Adam and Eve to enjoy eternal youth. The same anal-
ysis pertains to the age of Rebekah in C.

Another source of comment by critics in A are two things that appear to
be "left out." Much is made of the fact that there are two major, unan-
swered questions: (1) What happened to Sarah in Pharaoh's house—was
she defiled or not? (2) How did Pharaoh find out that the plagues came
upon him because Sarah was married to someone else?24 As for the first
question, the ancients affirmed that Sarah could not have been defiled
because righteous Abraham would not have taken her back.25 Most
moderns presume that she was defiled, supposing that this conclusion is the
natural implication and that we would have been told if it were otherwise.
This disagreement reveals the obvious: the text does not say. As for the
second question, we have already observed Koch's conclusion that the
method used to divine the reason for the plagues was left out because it
demonstrated efficacy of pagan methods of divination—thus revealing the
primitive character of the prototype of A. A much simpler reason was
suggested by H. Ewald: the author intended the reader to get the answer
to both of these questions from B.26 The paternalism of the notion that the
ancient Hebrews would not have cared (or even would have gloated at the
successful trick) whether or not the wife of Abraham was involved in adul-

23 E.g., W. Green, *Unity of Genesis*, 166-67: "The only point of any consequence in this
discussion is not what modern critics may think of the probability or possibility of what is here
narrated, but whether the sacred historian credited it. On the hypothesis of the critics, R
believed it and recorded it. What possible ground can they have for assuming that J and E
had less faith than R in what is here told of the marvelous beauty and attractiveness of
the ancestress of the nation?"

24 Alexander ("The Wife/Sister Incidents," 7) adds a third, "Did Abraham actually allow
Pharaoh to take Sarah without objecting?" But Abraham's own words in Gen 12:11-13 cer-
tainly imply that this was part of the plan.

25 M. Weinfeld cites the Genesis Apocryphon, Philo, Josephus, and rabbinic literature to
this effect ("Sarah in Abimelech's Palace (Genesis 20)—Against the Background of Assyrian
Law and the Genesis Apocryphon," *Tarbiz* 52 [1982/83] 639-42; and in English in *Melanges
bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de Monsieur Mathias Delcor* [ed. A. Caquot et al.; AOAT 215;

26 H. Ewald, *Die Komposition der Genesis kritisch untersucht* (1823) 228f., quoted by Green, *Unity
of Genesis*, 257 n. 1.
tery may account for its popularity among moderns, but from a perspective of overall unity, it cannot survive comparison with chap. 20. There we have an unambiguous answer in universal terms in God's words to Abimelech: "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against me; therefore I did not allow you to touch her. Now therefore restore the man's wife" (vv. 6-7a). The same circumstances prevailed in A, since Pharaoh, too, acted in ignorant integrity. Should we not therefore conclude that God should have also kept Pharaoh from touching her? The logic is compelling; the same Abraham and Sarah, the same conditions, the same God. If the answer to this major question in A is not to be found in B, then we must conclude that it is not answered at all, and we would have no clue as to why such a major question is left unanswered. Additionally, to assume that adultery was committed in Pharaoh's palace would make the purpose of divine intervention in A much different than in B, i.e., the purpose of God's intervention in A would not have been to prevent Sarah from being defiled, as in B, but rather to punish Pharaoh because she was defiled. Perhaps implied also from B, then, is that Pharaoh found out the same way Abimelech did: in a dream. Why narrative A should be dependent on B like this will be explained later.

27 S. Warner ("Primitive Saga Men," VT 29 [1979] 325-35) cites two works that demonstrate Gunkel's dependence on anthropological views of his time (p. 325 n. 3) which Warner summarizes as follows: "Modern man was not only different from primitive man, he was superior. Compared to modern man, primitive man was a child. And, like a child, primitive man was incapable of thinking complicated thoughts, of reasoning in any great depth, or of developing any sophisticated moral awareness" (p. 326). He goes on to show that without this view of "primitive" man, which no anthropologist holds today, "Gunkel's conception of the oral transmission process, . . . has no meaning, and should be abandoned" (ibid.). He concludes, "At present we see no reason to assume that the narratives of Genesis bear any close resemblance to orally transmitted data at all" (p. 335). His comments are also applicable to Koch's procedure.

28 J. Calvin, Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948) 1.363: "When he was in similar danger, (Gen. xx. 1,) God did not suffer her to be violated by the king of Gerar; shall we then suppose that she was now exposed to Pharaoh's lust?" As discussed later, another reason for making it clear that adultery did not occur in B concerns the legitimacy of Isaac's birth, which of course was not of concern in chap. 12. This does not make Calvin's reasoning any less valid, however.

29 Van Seters (Abraham, 171-75) argues for a literary dependence of B on A, saying, "The only way in which the cryptic character of v. 2 can be explained is that the other story [A] is known and can be assumed, and therefore Abraham's plan and its execution need not be recounted again in full" (p. 171). But methodologically it is equally compelling to argue that A is literally dependent on B because of the "cryptic character" of the former. This Van Seters does not do. He assumes without discussion that adultery occurred in A (p. 169), whereas the opposite is inferred from B.

30 Polzin argues strongly for a synchronic study of the three accounts but is immediately led astray by the assumption that adultery occurred in A, resulting in a moral improvement from A to B and the blessing of God in B as opposed to A ("The Ancestress of Israel," 81-98). There is a strange implication here: Abraham is rewarded in chap. 20 because God intervened before the adultery occurred, whereas in chap. 12 he is punished because God did not intervene until after the adultery. Abraham's behavior was the same in both cases.
The setting of B is more problematic. Here, Sarah is not 65, but 89 years old. In principle, the objection of her age might be dealt with in the same way as in A—that the preservation of Sarah's beauty is indeed even more remarkable than as portrayed in A. And this is how other writers have explained the problem.31 This resolution is excluded, however, by Sarah's own comments in 18:12. When Yhwh announces the coming birth of her son, Sarah scoffs, saying, "after I have become worn out [blḥ], shall I have pleasure [‘edna], my lord being old also?" Her use of blḥ suggests physical deterioration, not just chronological advancement.32 The majority of uses of the root blḥ, which occurs 11 times in the qal and 4 times in the piel, refer to worn-out clothing, or something being compared to worn-out clothing, with such parallels as cracked wineskins and moth-eaten garments (e.g., Josh 9:13; Job 13:28; Isa 50:9). Her use of ‘edna suggests to most interpreters that she considers herself too old for sexual intercourse (see n. 7). Either one of these considerations precludes the situation suggested in B, that Abimelech would be attracted to Sarah and add her to his harem of beautiful women. But actually, we notice that in B the author does not quite come out and say anything about Sarah's beauty. Was it omitted, as Koch suggests, because it was too ridiculous in this context? That does not solve the problem, for no reason is given in its place. The redaction critic must ask the same question that any reader would: "Why did Abraham pass off his wife as his sister? What was he afraid of?" If we follow the previous establishment of dependence of A on B, in which we allowed B to provide answers to questions raised in A, then perhaps we should now let A provide the answer to this great, unanswered question in B. The answer from A would have to be that Abraham feared for his life in Gerar because of the surpassing beauty of Sarah, his 89-year-old wife fit to be a queen: "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman. . . . they will kill me, but will let you live; so say that you are my sister, so that it may go well with me." As in the former case, if we do not let A explain B, then we will have no answer to our question. But how can such a conclusion be reconciled with Sarah's own self description just two chapters previously? And why were the accounts constructed so that neither is complete or can be understood without the other?

2. The Naming of Isaac

As everyone knows, Isaac got his name from his parents' laughter at the pre-announcement of his birth (17:17; 18:12); but the reason for their laughter is generally misunderstood. The apostles assure us that the reason

31 E.g., Green, Unity of Genesis, 254.
32 Cf. BDB, 115, "After I am worn out"; Speiser, Genesis, 128, "withered as I am, am I still to know enjoyment?"
was not unbelief (Rom 4:19; Heb 11:11), but what else could it be but unbelief, considering their words? Let us consider their respective cases of laughter, one at a time. In Genesis 17, Abraham is currently laboring under his third incorrect interpretation of who his heir is going to be. The identity of this heir is important, since the promises of Gen 12:1-3 require an heir for their fulfillment. The first false candidate was Lot; and the separation of Lot from Abraham indicated that he was not the promised heir. That he is not the heir is shown in the timing of the repetition of the divine promise to Abraham—"after Lot had separated from him" (13:14). That is, the promise is unaffected by his departure; its fulfillment is elsewhere. The next candidate is Eliezer of Damascus. When Abraham expresses this understanding to the Lord, Eliezer is excluded by the additional revelation that Abraham will in fact have an heir "who shall come forth from your own body" (15:4). The next chapter narrates the birth of Ishmael by Sarah's servant girl Hagar. Ishmael would naturally be thought of as the fulfillment of the promise of an heir from Abraham's own body in 15:4, especially since the promise of innumerable offspring given to Abraham (Gen 13:16) is applied to Ishmael (16:10). And as is clear from Sarah's own words ("perhaps I will be built from her"); 16:2) Ishmael was also considered Sarah's son. When the vision of chap. 17 occurs, then, Abraham interprets the promise there received in light of his incorrect interpretation that Ishmael is the heir through whom the promises will be fulfilled. He would interpret these promises as, "I will multiply you exceedingly [through Ishmael]" (v. 2), etc. In vv. 1-14 there is not the slightest hint that Ishmael is


34 T. L. Thompson (The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham [Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1974]) discusses Genesis 16, 21: 1-21, and 29:31-30:24 under the heading "Nuzi and the Patriarchal Narratives" (pp. 252-69). In the course of his discussion he says: "contrary to the opinion of the commentators, the children that are borne by the maids are not attributed to the wives. In Gen 30:20 Leah says: 'I have borne him six (not eight) sons'; it is not until the birth of Joseph by Rachel herself that Rachel's disgrace is removed (Gen 30:23), and the children of Rachel are the children she herself bore: Joseph and Benjamin. In Gen 21:10f., Sarah could hardly be more explicit that she did not consider Ishmael her son" (pp. 256-57). This conclusion, however, is based on a selective listing of the evidence, since he does not provide an explanation for what Sarah meant when she said, "Perhaps I will be built from her," and since Rachel's explicit statement at the birth of Dan through the surrogate Bilhah ("God. . . has listened to my voice and given me a son"); 30:6) so clearly establishes the fact that Rachel considered Dan to be her son. Nor does he explain in what sense Rachel "prevailed" over Leah when Bilhah bore Naphtali (30:8), or why other women would count Leah blessed because of the birth of Asher by Zilpah (30:13). These passages are meaningless unless we see that some type of vicarious participation in motherhood was recognized by the nonbearing wives in these situations. In this regard, Gen 21:10 constitutes a clear repudiation by Sarah of her former views. Additionally, there is the subjective argument that a much more satisfying exegesis of Genesis 17 and 18 is arrived at by postulating that Sarah did consider Ishmael her son—not exclusively hers, but at least to the extent of remediying her barreness. The validity of this inductive argument, of course, depends on the persuasiveness of the exegesis presented in this essay.
not the heir of promise that Abraham assumes him to be; thus he is being further "hardened" in that interpretation. In v. 15, Sarah is mentioned for the first time in any of the promises: she too will have a new name. Then God says, "I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her" (v. 16). This promise of a son to be born to Sarah presents a challenge to Abraham to abandon his current interpretation of God's promises which identifies Ishmael as the promised heir. What is not clear in the translations, however, is that the promise leaves some room for maneuvering, allowing Abraham to cling to the interpretation to which he is already predisposed. The verbs used in the series of promises concerning Sarah are *uberakti* . . . *natatti* . . . *uberaktiha wehayeta* . . . *yihyu* (v. 16). We normally would expect the imperfect to be used in such a series when the *waw* is not joined to the verb (thus *yihyu*, not *hayu* at the end of the verse). But "I will give you a son by her" is translated not from *etten*, but from *natatti*. This usage is really not surprising, since the form *natatti* without *waw* has already been used with a future sense in this chapter (v. 5; cf. v. 6, *unetattika*; also in Gen 15: 18; 23:11, 13). But one who is inclined to interpret divine revelation according to a certain paradigm will try to fit any new revelation into that same old paradigm. Thus Abraham could seize on the word *natatti* and force the promise into fitting an "Ishmael interpretation": "I will bless her—indeed I have already given you a son by her [Ishmael, who was her son, according to their way of thinking], and I will bless her [the same way I will bless you, by blessing Ishmael her son]" etc. That he recognizes there is another interpretation is clear from his thoughts which are revealed in v. 17; "Abraham fell on his face and laughed, thinking, 'Shall one be born to a 100 year old man? Or Sarah—shall a 90-year-old woman give birth?' " The inertia of 13 years of misinterpretation, combined with the seeming impossibility of the latter interpretation, cause him to cling to his identification of Ishmael as the heir of promise. Abraham's laughter should thus be seen as a rejection of what he thought was just one possible (even if more probable) interpretation; and his statement "May Ishmael indeed live before you" (v. 18) should be viewed not only as the expression of his choice of interpretations, but also as a seeking of affirmation from God that his interpretation is correct. Having succeeded in getting him to laugh, the Lord then gives him the promise in a manner that cannot be misunderstood: "Sarah your wife is going to bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac" (v. 19). This cannot be misinterpreted; only believed or disbelieved. We can imagine Abraham feeling that he was "set up" to laugh. If he had been told outright in the beginning of the vision that the promised heir would be born by Sarah (literally), he would have believed—as in Gen 15:6. As it was, however, he was led into a trap by a promise that left some room for his old interpretation, and he ended up laughing at God's announced intention. But perhaps the point is, Abraham set himself up for this trap. If he had not resorted to the Ishmael solution contrary to God's
standards for man and wife, set in the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:24, a man "shall cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"), there would have been no ambiguity in the promises of chap. 17, for there would not have been any Ishmael to whom to refer them. They would have to refer to a son yet to be born to Sarah. Abraham is thus being taught to interpret God's promises according to God's nature, and not to laugh at their implications in preference to interpretations derived from pagan cultural assumptions.

Sarah learns the same lesson in chap. 18. She, like her husband, does not see any conflict between her barrenness and God's promises. She has already "solved" that problem; she has a son, Ishmael. One day, three strangers happen by, for whom Abraham and Sarah prepare a meal. The three sit down to eat, with Sarah at the tent door behind them, so that they cannot see her (v. 10). Then comes the set-up: "Where is Sarah your wife?" This question does two things. First, the mention of her name ensures her complete attention to what is about to be said. Second, the question continues the pretense of the visitors that they are mere human beings—were they otherwise there would be no need to ask where Sarah was. After Abraham points her out, the promise comes from one stranger: "I will surely return to you at this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son" (v. 10). Unlike the promise to her husband, the meaning of this promise is not ambiguous. But she is not aware of the identity of the one giving the promise—it's just a stranger who happened by, as far as she knows. Predictably, she laughs; under such circumstances, who wouldn't? As far as she is concerned, the promise of an heir for Abraham has been fulfilled, for she already has a son. After 13 years, the correctness of the Ishmaelite interpretation would seem to have been validated by her progression from barrenness to the post menstrual phase of her life. So if a man comes by and gives a crazy promise, why shouldn't she laugh? Only after she laughs does she learn that it was not a mere man who has just made this promise. He knows she laughed, even though she did so silently, and he can read her mind and tell her her thoughts (v. 13). And the one who can read her mind asks, "Is anything too difficult for Yhwh?" (v. 14).  

Sarah was set up to laugh in a manner different from her husband, appropriate to her different position. Abraham the prophet received God's word directly—thus he was set up to laugh directly at God's word. Sarah received God's word indirectly, through a man, her husband. Consequently she is made to laugh at the words of a mere man (apparently). The suggestion is that she is just as much to blame for doing so, for not correctly responding to her barren condition by patiently waiting for the fulfillment of the promise. For if she had not resorted to the Ishmael solution, faith in

35 The narrator likewise does not identify Yhwh as one of the three men until v. 13, when he reveals himself to Sarah by reading her mind. The NIV translators, following their occasional practice of inserting the subject's name when it is not in the original, undo this literary device in v. 10.
God would have led her to believe even a stranger who came by and announced the impending and long-expected fulfillment of the promise. There is a third group that receives the word of God: neither prophet (Abraham), nor audience of a prophet (Sarah), but those who merely read God's word handed down to them. They, too, will be caught laughing. The set-up for this group occurs in our second wife/sister episode: "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' So Abimelech king of Gerar took Sarah" (Gen 20:2). Can anything be more worthy of laughing at than the thought of a king taking this withered old woman into his harem, to join the most beautiful women of his realm? And so multitudes have laughed (or scoffed) at this report down through the ages. But we should know better by now not to be caught laughing. For a little reflection shows that the reader who laughs at the idea of Sarah being desirable to Abimelech has not laughed at anything different from what Abraham and Sarah laughed at. Sarah said, "After I am old, shall I have pleasure?" for which she was rebuked by Yhwh, who said, "Is anything too difficult for Yhwh?" And now we see Abimelech anticipating the very thing Sarah laughed at. How dare we laugh, too? The question not answered in B would be readily supplied to the mind of the reader who read A: "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; and it will come about that when [they] see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. So say that you are my sister, so that... I may live on account of you" (Gen 12: 11-13). The paging back and forth between chap. 12 and chap. 20 which is necessitated by the incompleteness of each episode leads us to conclude that Sarah is the same in both cases. She is no longer the wrinkled old lady of chap. 18, but rather the exceptionally beautiful Sarah of some 24 years earlier when she entered the promised land. The reader of chap. 20 is to refer back to chap. 18 not to see what Sarah is like, but to see what she has been changed from. And he refers to chap. 12 and its description of her beauty to see what she has been restored to. Rather than stating that fact outright, the author has abruptly presented the reader with a seemingly incongruous and impossible situation; the brief statement of v. 2 would instantly let the reader remember the previous account and let it fill in the details, causing him, after sitting in judgment on Abraham and Sarah for their laughter, to join them in being caught laughing at the word of God. Isaac is indeed well named! The implication should not escape us that the author is teaching us to treat his written words as equivalent to God's words spoken directly to Abraham. Abraham is taught not to laugh at the direct pronouncements of God; Sarah at the word of God pronounced by man. Then future generations are taught not to laugh at the written word of God. From a redaction-critical perspective, then, the genre classifications of the form critics, such as "Tale told to entertain" and "Legend," must be rejected. The one responsible for placing the accounts in their present context wants us to treat them as the written oracle of God. And we would do well to remember that there is no hard evidence that they ever existed in any other form or context.
Also highly dubious is the source-critical contention that Abraham's and Sarah's laughter indicates two different sources' explanations for how Isaac got his name. For the text has been clearly so set up that not only Abraham and Sarah laugh, but multitudes down through the ages laugh as well. At this point one might wonder whether such an important matter as the rejuvenation of Sarah should be recognized without an explicit mention of it in the text. Is there anything else in the context to support this interpretation besides the mutually interdependent construction of A and B? At least two lines of evidence support this interpretation. First is the case of Abraham himself. In Gen 17:17 he regarded himself as too old to father a child. For Isaac to be conceived, then, what happened to Abraham? Was he given a one-time ability to generate offspring, or was his bodily state rejuvenated, as I suggested Sarah's was? The answer to this is made clear in Gen 25:1-2, where we read that after the death of Sarah, long after describing himself as too old to father a child, he takes another wife and fathers six more children! Rejuvenation is thus clear in the case of Abraham, and this lends credence to the same conclusion for Sarah.

A second line of evidence comes from proposing a test to the rejuvenation hypothesis. If Sarah were made 24 years younger at the age of 89, then, all other things being equal, she should live at least another 24 years after that point to get back to the same place she was when she laughed. But if she died just a few years after Isaac was born, that would cast doubt on the whole rejuvenation hypothesis. But how can we apply this test, since Scripture does not indicate the life span of women? We know how long Adam lived, but not Eve; Isaac, but not Rebekah; Moses and Aaron, but not Miriam; etc. Never does the Bible give us the age at which a woman died. With one exception, that is. Sarah just happens to be the only woman in the Bible whose life span is recorded; she lived another 38 years after the events of chap. 20 (Gen 23:1). And because she is the only woman so treated, we have a means of testing the rejuvenation hypothesis. Perhaps, then, that is the reason we are told how long she lived. If one rejects this explanation, then he should come up with some other one in its place for why Sarah's life span is given, while no other woman's is.

The suggestion that Sarah was rejuvenated was made by some of the rabbis, according to M. Zlotowitz. It has also had at least two proponents in modern times: J. Kurtz and G. Aalders. Neither offered any evidence

36 Predictably, this has been taken as another contradiction indicating multiple sources behind Genesis; see, e.g., Spurrell, Text of Genesis, xvi.
37 "It may be that, as the Rabbis assert, . . . her youthfulness returned in preparation for conception (Radak, Ramban; . . . ). . . . Cf. Bava etzia 87a: . . . her skin became smooth, her wrinkles disappeared, and her former beauty was regained" (N. Scherman and M. Zlotowitz, Bereishis / Genesis: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources, vol. 1(a) [The ArtScroll Tanach Series; Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1986] 722).
38 J. Kurtz wrote, "The matter admits of ready explanation. Since the visit of the angels in Mamre when Sarah was set apart to become mother, and through the creative agency of God
for the view, except that it seemed like an obvious way out of the difficulty. Kurtz's view was rejected without explanation by Keil, who said that Abimelech wanted to marry Sarah not for her beauty, but in order to make a marriage alliance to gain favor with the great prince (per Gen 23:6) Abraham. But this view, which also goes back to the rabbis, is incredible, since it ignores the fact that Abraham lied because he was afraid of something. Keil's view leads to the conclusion that he was afraid that Abimelech would kill him to make an alliance with him to gain his favor, which of course is ridiculous.

Another support for this interpretation is that it dovetails with another theme of promise-fulfillment in the Abraham cycle. In addition to the promise of offspring, Abraham received the promise of land. The incongruity of this promise is brought out in the juxtaposition of the situation and the promise in Gen 12:6b-7a, "Now the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared to Abram and said, 'To your offspring I will give this land.' " He had not been brought to inherit a vacant lot; this land was already inhabited. In Gen 13:15 the promise of land is both "to you. . . and to your offspring." In chap. 15 Abraham is again promised the land, "I am Yhwh who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it" (15:7). Does this mean that Abraham is personally going to inherit the land, not just indirectly through his offspring? Since it seemed quite unlikely for a single nomad, powerful though he was, to dispossess an inhabited land, he asks, "how may I know that I will possess it?" (v. 8). He is then instructed to bring some animals for sacrifice. What follows is a covenant ceremony, with a solemn promise of the land as Yhwh passes a flaming torch between the carcass pieces. The references to time of day require some comment. The promise of v. 7 occurs while it is very dark, rendered capable of it, her youth and beauty had returned: this new life would manifest itself in her appearance, and lend it fresh beauty and new charms" (History of the Old Covenant [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1870] 250). Similarly, G. Aalders: "We believe that Sarah experienced a physical miracle that enabled her to bear a child at an extremely advanced age. This miracle of physical rejuvenation could well have caused Sarah also to retain or, if need be, to regain her physical attractiveness to such an extent that she would draw the attention of Abimelech" (Genesis [2 vols.; Bible Student's Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981] 2.27). J. Quarry suggested, "perhaps this story is introduced to indicate that. . . she had acquired such a renewal of the natural concomitant physical attributes, as would render her childbearing a matter of less curiosity" (Genesis and its Authorship: Two Dissertations [London: Williams & Norgate, 1866] 449 n. I). G. von Rad did not know the truth of what he wrote: "Obviously the narrator imagines Sarah to be much younger" (Genesis: A Commentary [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964] 222).


40 "According to Ran, Abimelech took Sarah, not because of her beauty, but because she was Abraham's 'sister' and he wished to marry into so distinguished a family" (Zlotowitz, Bereishis, 722.)
since the stars can be seen well (v. 5). In v. 12, however, the sun has not yet set, and in v. 17 it is dark again. What has happened, then, seems to be that in the early morning darkness Abraham is given the promise, then told to bring the animals. When he does so, nothing happens. He waits around all day, and nothing happens except that some vultures try to get the animals. Finally, the sun sets and he falls into a deep sleep. Then comes the covenant ceremony and a revelation of the future. The rest of Abraham's life will be spent just as this day has been; he will wait, and nothing will happen as far as inheriting the land. Then he will fall asleep (die; v. 15). After 400 years of exile and oppression of his descendants, they will return and inherit the land.

First he is told he will inherit the land. Then when he asks how he can know for sure, he is told he will die before it is inherited by his offspring. So will Abraham inherit the land or not? Is the Lord less able to reward his servants than the kings of that age, who in the style of Genesis 15 gave grants of land to their faithful servants which were effective while they were still living? Genesis 15 makes it clear that if Abraham is going to inherit the land, it has to be in the resurrection. If he is not going to inherit it, then what is God's promise worth to Abraham? To imply a resurrection from Genesis 15 may seem like reading into the text, but some meaning must attach to the fact that Abraham is made to wait all day, doing nothing, and to the sequence of events in chap. 15. A source-critical explanation of sloppy editing strikes us as the lazy way out.

The two themes of son and land parallel each other. When Abraham and Sarah entered the promised land with a promise of offspring they were "alive" with respect to being able to have children. This is shown on the one hand by Abraham later fathering Ishmael, and on the other by the fact that Sarah, though barren, did not give up hope of giving birth until 16:2 (and her youthful beauty surely gave her reason to hope). But while waiting for the promise, they both "died" with respect to being able to have children (17:17; 18:12). After they "died" they were "brought back to life" so that Isaac could be born and the promise fulfilled. This sequence forms a paradigm of the promise of the land. They entered the land and received a promise to inherit that land. Then they wait the rest of their lives, the promise unfulfilled, and die without receiving it. It is only in the resurrection that they can receive it. Rejuvenation is thus a token, or type, of resurrection. This link between the two was evidently on Paul's mind when he penned Rom 4:17-19, "in the sight of Him whom [Abraham] believed, even God, who gives life to the dead. . . he believed, in order that he might

41 Not surprisingly, this is held to indicate a multiple-source background to the account. See Speiser, Genesis, 114-15. Discrepancies in time of day are one factor which led him to say, "the whole is clearly not of a piece, though now intricately blended,"
42 G, Wenham also notes this symbolic meaning of Abraham’s sleep (Genesis 1-15 [WBC 1; Waco, TX: Word, 1987] 335).
become a father. . . he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead, and the deadness of Sarah's womb" (also see Heb 11:12-13).

Paul seems to have been preceded as a witness to the rejuvenation interpretation by Isaiah the prophet. In Isa 51:2-3, the only OT passage outside of Genesis that refers to Sarah, the righteous remnant is exorted to consider the example of their ancestors:

Look to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain;
When he was one I called him,
Then I blessed him, and multiplied him.
Indeed the Lord will comfort Zion;
He will comfort all her waste places.
And her wilderness he will make like Eden,
And her desert like the Garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
Thanksgiving and sound of a melody.

The example of Abraham and Sarah seems especially appropriate once we recognize a rejuvenation, a physical transformation analogous to changing a desert into a paradise. Rejoicing also followed that transformation (Gen 21:6). It is also appropriate to cite Eden ['eden], since Sarah had said, "Shall I have 'edna?"

There is therefore no problem in viewing chap. 20 as properly following chaps. 18 and 19. Likewise, there are two features of chap. 21 which are incomprehensible without chap. 20. The first of these is the emphasis with which Isaac is said to be the son of Abraham in Gen 21:2-5 (four times using the verb יָלַד with the preposition ל; three times using the possessive suffix with בן). Zlotowitz explained this redundancy as follows: "The repeated emphasis on born to 'him' testifies against the scoffers that the child was born of Abraham's seed and none other."\(^{44}\) The "other" would obviously be Abimelech, since Sarah had just been in his harem. Zlotowitz cites Rashi to this effect in the latter's commentary on Gen 25:19: "Cynics of Abraham's generation had been saying that Sarah, who had lived so long with Abraham without bearing a child, must have become pregnant by Abimelech."\(^{45}\) This leads to the second feature of chap. 21 explained by chap. 20. It was clearly not "cynics" in general asserting Isaac's illegitimacy, but Ishmael, as is clear from the following context, where we find Ishmael mocking Isaac with some taunt not mentioned, but which deeply offends Sarah and is so serious an offense that Ishmael is disinherited by divine

\(^{44}\) Zlotowitz, Bereishis, 747.

\(^{45}\) Ibid., 1044. The citation reads, "Tanchuma; Rashi as explained by Mizrachi." Cf. A. Levene, trans., The Early Syrian Fathers on Genesis (London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1951) 92-93: "But in the case of Abimelech, he mentions explicitly that he did not draw near unto her, because as she was already pregnant with Isaac, it should not be thought that it was from another and not from Abraham."
decree. What could offend Sarah more than to assert that Isaac was Abimelech's son? Ishmael's interest (also Hagar's) in asserting such a claim would be obvious, since it would involve a denial of Isaac's legitimate inheritance rights in favor of his own, contrary to God's revealed will. The punishment imposed (loss of his own inheritance) is quite appropriate to the offense.  

The more trivial contextual "discrepancies" of B can now be dealt with. Some critics cite the implausibility of Abraham twice falling into the same error. But in whose opinion is it implausible? Certainly not the author's; to maintain that he was merely in the business of collecting variant traditions would contradict the "evidence" cited by critics to indicate that the re-ductor has edited the material precisely to present the accounts as two different episodes in the life of Abraham. Besides, we should know by now that we should not label what we read as "implausible," lest we be caught laughing again.

This is not to say that no conclusions should be drawn from the fact that Abraham erred in this way twice. Though outwardly the offense appears the same in both cases, several considerations indicate that the second lapse was much more blameworthy than the first. It was suggested earlier that in A the promise of the heir could have been considered as being fulfilled through Lot, so that it did not depend on Abraham's continued existence. Likewise no mention had been made of Sarah's involvement in the promise. These factors mitigate Abraham's actions somewhat; he failed to do what is right no matter the consequences, which could have been death. In B, however, the same error indicates flat unbelief in God's explicit promise; he had by now received the promise that he would die "in peace" (15:15), yet he fears that he will be murdered. And God had just told him that in a year's time Sarah will bear him a son. Finally, the experience of God's intervention in plaguing Pharaoh's house on his behalf in a similar situation gives him even less excuse for unbelief. Even if he just proceeded in the same way because he knew God would rescue him again, then he was guilty of testing God. These considerations make very dubious Polzin's view that the situation in B is transformed into a morally better situation than A (see n. 30; his reason for this is the erroneous assumption that adultery occurred in A).

Another objection was that it must have taken quite some time to discover that "the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech" (v. 18), whereas only a few months could conceivably be involved in chap. 20, according to the chronological framework. But those who presume that a period of years was involved run into trouble in the story itself. We are told that Abimelech had not approached Sarah (v. 4); but that was obviously the purpose for which he had taken her. Would he

46 As my wife Linda pointed out to me, John 8:41 might be a NT counterpart to this, if it is in fact a slur on the legitimacy of the birth of Isaac.
wait years to do so? The more likely explanation is that, as in A, there were "plagues"; here Green suggested some kind of physical affliction preventing intercourse, requiring healing.47

We have shown how A and B are interdependent, and this militates against Koch's treatment of them as independent units. But an even greater dependence on the Exodus narrative can be shown for A. It was well known to the ancients that Gen 12:10-20 is typologically related to the account of the Exodus, a fact that has not been dealt with by most moderns. If Abraham went down to Egypt because of famine; the sons of Israel went down to Egypt because of famine, where they became the nation of Israel. Abraham prospered in Egypt; Israel prospered in Egypt. Abraham feared that he would be killed, while Sarah would be spared; Pharaoh commanded that the Hebrew male children be killed, while the females should be spared. Yhwh sent plagues on Pharaoh because of Sarah; Yhwh sent plagues on Pharaoh because of his treatment of Israel. Pharaoh sent away Abraham and Sarah with much property; Pharaoh sent away Israel with much property. Abraham and Sarah returned to Canaan; Israel returned to Canaan. Additionally, though he let Abraham go to Egypt, God told Isaac not to go (Gen 26:2); likewise Israel was told not to return to Egypt (Deut 17:16), thus involving C in the typology as well. It is evident, then, that virtually every detail of A has a typological connection with the Exodus narrative. That being the case, one has to wonder what is the justification for and the value in studying it primarily as an independent unit, as the form critics do. It is thoroughly dependent on the Exodus narrative and interdependent with Genesis 20, and its unique features are explained at least in part by these dependencies.

So far little has been said about C. It certainly lacks the drama of the other two passages, since no one tries to take Rebekah away from Isaac, and there is no divine intervention to save her. It does look like it could be another version of B, since Abimelech (and Phicol immediately following) reappears here, over 76 years after B. And the line of reasoning that says Abraham would not make the same mistake twice, concludes likewise that Isaac would not make the same mistake as his father.

47 Green, Unity of Genesis, 257. He says such a plague is implied in the fact that Abimelech required healing as well as his wife and servant girls (20:17).

Let us begin a redaction-critical approach by agreeing that it is indeed a remarkable thing that this Abimelech should have such a long reign. The difficulty cannot be avoided by supposing that "Abimelech" is a dynastic title such as "Pharaoh" (appealing to Psalm 34, title), or that it is the same name given to a son or grandson. While such a solution might be plausible for the king himself, the same could not be maintained for his general Phicol, who is with the king after both accounts. The question to ask is, what would account for such a remarkably long reign?

Here we can again profit from a comparison of the three accounts. In A, Pharaoh expelled Abraham from his country. The gifts given to Abraham were because of his (supposed) relation to Sarah, not because of his relation to the Lord. Abimelech, however, gave gifts to Abraham after God intervened for him, and he told Abraham to settle wherever he wanted in his land (Gen 20:14-15). In the next chapter, Abimelech and Phicol say to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do; now therefore swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, or with my offspring, or with my posterity; but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me" (21:22b-23). Recall that God had said to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you" (12:3). Would it be surprising to find recorded the fulfillment of that promise? Abimelech and Phicol certainly fit the category of those who blessed Abraham. And in chap. 26, we find it was not only Abraham who honored the request "according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me," but God honored it as well, blessing them with very long lives and reigns. This is just another example of God exercising his sovereignty and creative power over the aging process. Clearly the Abimelech of C has changed since the one of B, inconsistent with the notion of duplicate versions. The Abimelech of B is a harem-building king eager to acquire Sarah. But in C, where the whole town is stirred over the beauty of Rebekah, Abimelech is not interested. He seems to spend his time peeping through windows (v. 8), consistent with the idea of a much older man. The title "king of the Philistines" rather than "king of Gerar" may indicate some blessing of a greater kingdom as well.

Another objection has been that C presumes that Isaac and Rebekah are childless—for how could they pretend to be brother and sister with their two boys there? Yet the chronology places the event after the death of Abraham (26:18), making Jacob and Esau at least 16 years old. But this objection assumes what is plainly false—that only the family of four entered town, so that the boys would have appeared conspicuously without parents. Like his father, Isaac had many—perhaps hundreds—of men working for him and travelling with him (26:14-15, 19; see 14: 14), some no doubt with families of their own. Surely we can credit Isaac with enough intelligence to figure out a way to pass off his sons (who may have been fully grown anyway) as someone else's. Bible scholars likewise ought to be able to figure it out.
Having shown that C suitably fits its context, we still need to ask what contribution it makes to the development of the great themes of Genesis. If the only purpose were to show God's blessing on those who bless Abraham it could have been omitted, since Abimelech and Phicol are mentioned in the following narrative. Perhaps a clue to the importance of the story can be obtained from the critics' observation about the son repeating the mistake of his father. Certainly any reader of C would instantly realize that Isaac is following in his father's footsteps, and the narrative itself points back to A in v. 1: "there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham," referring back to 12:10. But the references to Abraham's life do not stop with C. Through the rest of chap. 26 we see Isaac doing what his father did. "Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, . . . and he gave them the same names which his father had given them" (v. 18); "The Lord appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham'" (v. 24). Also like his father he grew wealthy (vv. 12-14), and made a covenant with Abimelech and Phicol at Beersheba (vv. 26-33). "Like father, like son" is an obvious inference, and the inclusion of the wife/sister motif lets us know that Isaac is like his father in every respect, including his failings.49

The significance of this duplication can be seen in considering the development of the promises of the new Adam in the book of Genesis. The reason for the new Adam, of course, is the failure of the first Adam. The commission given to Adam was to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it as man in the image of God. The result of Adam's sin was that instead the earth was filled with wickedness and then destroyed (6:11-13). After the flood, the commission is given anew to Noah (9:1-7), leading us to think of him as another Adam, the father of the race that will fulfill God's purpose in creation. Disappointment soon comes, however, as the sin of Ham, the cursing of Canaan, and the tower of Babel incidents are narrated. It seems that things are going to turn out just as the first time; that Noah is not the new Adam after all. Then the commission of Adam is given to Abraham in the form of a promise (the aspects of fruitfulness and dominion can both be seen in 17:2, 4, 6). Here there is not a command for men to fulfill, but God's declaration of his intention to make Abraham the new Adam, the father of the righteous seed (which is why Paul said that Abraham received a promise that he would inherit the world; Rom 4:13). But here again there is disappointment: Abraham the father of the righteous fathered Ishmael the wicked, who is expelled from the family and his inheritance because of his persecution of Isaac, who inherits the promise of Abraham. If Abraham is not the new Adam, then maybe Isaac is. That would certainly explain all the attention given to him: his conception from

49 Green (Unity of Genesis, 325) also noted, "Isaac's life was to such an extent an imitation of his father's that no surprise need be felt at his even copying his faults." But the significance of the repetition requires explanation.
his rejuvenated parents, the stress on the covenant passing to Isaac, not Ishmael (17:19-21), and the expulsion of Ishmael for mocking his younger brother (21:9-12; see p. 17 for a suggestion as to the content of this mocking). Will the promise of the new Adam then be fulfilled through the miracle son, Isaac? Will he be what his father was not? The phrase "she is my sister" (26:7) is enough to dispel that notion, along with the previous narrative of Jacob and Esau, another Isaac and Ishmael pair. "Like father, like son" thus has an important function in the development of the messianic promise. It continues the cycle of expectation/disappointment which points the faithful reader toward a future fulfillment, the coming of the true new Adam who will be greater than Abraham and Isaac, who only symbolically represented him. This cycle of expectation/disappointment is encapsulated within C itself, which records the giving of the messianic promise to Isaac (vv. 3-5), followed immediately by Isaac's moral lapse (vv. 6-7). Note also the irony of juxtaposing v. 5, "because Abraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws," with vv. 6-7, "so Isaac... said 'she is my sister,' for he was afraid" (the full irony of this would not be present without the knowledge that Abraham who "obeyed me" had lapsed as Isaac did). Likewise the first lapse of Abraham in A occurred right after the giving of the promise (12:7).50

The interpretation of these accounts as showing that Abraham and Isaac were really like the first Adam, though spoken of as the new Adam, is corroborated by W. Berg, who calls A "The Fall of Abraham," pointing back to Genesis 3.51 Among other clues is the recurrent question, "What is this you have done?" in 3:13 (God to Eve), 12:18 (Pharaoh to Abraham), and 26:10 (Abimelech to Isaac). Berg's essay on A followed an earlier analysis of Genesis 16 with similar conclusions.52 In both cases, Abraham's lapse is a violation of the Edenic ordinance of marriage. Such an analogy with the fall of Adam in Genesis 3 would make the lapse in B even more significant, since in that case Abraham and Sarah had been restored to "Eden" (Isa 51:3), yet fell again. The point to observe is that their rejuvenation did not undo the effects of the fall of Adam, and so they just grew old again and died. It is also noteworthy that the "Fall of David" (perhaps another "new Adam," for the promise of fruitfulness and dominion given to Abraham are also found in 2 Samuel 7) is ironically reminiscent of B (as P. Miscall has noted),53 since king David did to the foreigner Uriah what

50 As noted above, Koch felt that it was "odd" that this sequence would occur. It has a theological, not form-critical, explanation.
53 P. Miscall, "Literary Unity in Old Testament Narrative," Semita 15 (1979) 27-44. "What the patriarch, the elect, fears of the foreigners because of his wife is just what David, the elect, the Israeliite king, does to Uriah the Hittite because of his wife" (p. 39).
Abraham was afraid the foreign king Abimelech would do to him (2 Samuel 11). The irony is not only in the role reversal, but that Abraham's fears were unfounded. Abimelech the pagan protested his innocence and rebuked Abraham for exposing him to God's wrath by his subterfuge; Abraham responded that he did it because he was sure there was no fear of God in that (pagan) place (20:9-11). What does that say when such a thing actually did happen in Israel, under its greatest king, the one after God's own heart, the one who did more to fulfill the Adamic commission than Abraham or Isaac? Such a series of lapses in the "new Adams" would certainly create a realization that a "greater" new Adam was required to fill the role. When the true new Adam came, instead of exposing his bride to defilement to save his own life, he "gave himself up for her to make her holy" (Eph 5:25-26).

When Paul goes on to say, "This is a profound mystery" (Eph 5:32), perhaps he means for us to make this comparison with the patriarchs. John 4, following John the Baptist's designation of Jesus as the bridegroom (John 3:25-30), certainly provides the basis for such a comparison, since a man meeting a woman at a well is the classic OT courtship scene (see Genesis 24; 29; Exodus 2). The most detailed of these accounts, Genesis 24, finds a number of striking parallels in John 4. (1) A man is by a well when a woman comes along to draw water, and he asks her for a drink (Gen 24:33; John 4:7). (2) The woman runs back and tells her family (Gen 24:28), or her townspeople (John 4:28-29). (3) The man is met and invited to the home (Gen 24:29-32), or the town (John 4:30, 39-40). (4) The man refuses to eat (Gen 24:33; John 4:27, 31-32). (5) The man stays overnight (= 2 days; Gen 24:54; John 4:40). The overall theme, brought out in the conversation between the man and woman, may also be compared: in Genesis 24 a father is seeking a virtuous bride for his son; in John 4 the Father seeks true worshipers (v. 23).54

Once the parallels are accepted, the contrasts between the two brides are equally striking. Rebekah was from a good family, not a Canaanite; a Samaritan woman would be off-limits as a bride for a Jew. Rebekah was a virgin; her NT counterpart had been married five times, and was currently living with a man to whom she was not married. Rebekah was in every way the model bride, but Isaac compromised her virtue, "because I thought I might lose my life on account of her" (Gen 26:9), reflecting a value system he learned from his father. The one greater than Isaac willingly gave up his life for his most unworthy bride.

54 A detailed comparison between the two accounts might yield further parallels, as might analysis of the other OT courtship scenes. For example, J. H. Bernard notes a "striking parallel" with Josephus' account of Moses at the well, where Josephus specifies the time as noon, as in John 4:6 (J. H. Bernard, A Critical & Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According St. John [2 vols.; ICC; New York: Scribner, 1929] 1.136).
3. Confirmation from Another "Contradiction"

Examination of another apparent contradiction in Genesis, while not directly related to the wife/sister episodes, will aid the thesis presented here by showing that apparent contradiction is a means of bringing out recurring themes of the patriarchal promises. The apparent contradiction deals with the scene of Isaac's blessing of Jacob. In Isaac's instructions to Esau of Gen 27:1-4, he made it clear that he considered his death to be imminent (as did Rebekah and Esau; Gen 27:41-45). Yet the patriarchal chronology indicates that Isaac did not die soon after, but lived at least 40 more years. Before rushing to the conclusion that this is a contradiction, perhaps we should first try the assumption that the apparent contradiction is simply meant to cause us to inquire as to what happened that gave Isaac a new lease on life. Once we ask such a question, the answer is not far away. Something indeed did happen which would explain such a lengthening of life. We are told that of his two sons, Isaac favored Esau, which was to the detriment of Jacob, whom God favored (Gen 25:23, 28). The Lord said to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you, but the one who curses you I will curse" (Gen 12:5). The same thing is spoken to Isaac himself, then later to Jacob. While Isaac certainly does not fit into the category of a wicked man, persecuting Jacob, it is reasonable to infer that his favoring of (the rejected) Esau over Jacob would not be without penalty. And what would be a suitable penalty for Isaac treating Jacob like he should have treated Esau, and vice versa? Would it not be for God to treat Isaac as Ishmael? That is in fact what he did, for the patriarchal chronology indicates that Isaac was about 137 years old when this incident took place (see n. 55). His older brother Ishmael had died at the age of 137 (Gen 25:17), and it looked as if Isaac would do the same. Since Isaac treated Jacob like he should have treated Esau, God was treating Isaac like he treated Ishmael in terms of life span. He was going to die "young." And we would not know that unless Ishmael's life span were given, contrary to the pattern of Genesis, where as a rule only men in the line from Adam to Joseph have their life span given. As we saw earlier, Sarah is an exception to this pattern, and there was a definite reason for that. Likewise in the case of Ishmael some explanation seems to be called for as to why his life span should be given. The explanation offered here is that it shows how and why Isaac's life was going to be cut short. Isaac said to Jacob, thinking he was speaking to Esau, "Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you" (Gen 27:29). How ironic that he himself was under penalty for blessing the wrong one up

55 Jacob went to Egypt when he was 130 years old, when Joseph was about 39 (compare Gen 45:11 and 41:46; assuming that the years of plenty began immediately after Pharaoh's dreams). Thus Jacob was about 91 when Joseph was born, and this was about 14 years after he was blessed by Isaac (Gen 29:18, 30, 30:25), making Jacob about 77 years old when he left home. This would make Isaac 137 years old at the time (Gen 25:26), give or take a few years, and he lived to be 180 (Gen 35:28).
to this point. Ironic also that the physical degradation he experienced (his blindness) was what prevented him from recognizing that he was blessing the "wrong" (actually right) son. It is only now when he comes to understand that it is God's will to bless Jacob, and he willingly does so (Gen 28:3), that he is released from this penalty and given an extension of life. In this episode, then, we have reinforced several themes dealt with earlier. First, as already mentioned, we see the use of apparent contradiction to cause the reader to ask certain questions. Then, we see the answer to that contradiction in terms of God's exercising control over the aging process in fulfilling the patriarchal promises. In connection with this, we also see the deliberate departure from a general pattern in terms of giving life spans to assist in the elucidation of the theme. All of this reinforces the conclusions reached earlier.

4. Structural Considerations

G. Rendsburg has recently shown how our three narratives fit into the framework of the "Abraham cycle" and the "Jacob cycle." In the former he builds on the work of U. Cassuto, who identified ten trials of Abraham that are in a basically chiastic order of five pairs. Rendsburg combined two pairs into one in order to form a more perfect chiasm, then included the genealogies at the beginning and end as framing the cycle. The structure is as follows:

A Genealogy of Terah (11:27-32)
B Start of Abraham's Spiritual Odyssey (12: 1-9)
C Sarai in foreign palace; ordeal ends in peace and success;
   Abram and Lot part (12:10-13:18)
D Abram comes to the rescue of Sodom and Lot (14:1-24)
E Covenant with Abraham; Annunciation of Ishmael (15:1-16:16)
E' Covenant with Abraham; Annunciation of Isaac (17: 1-18: 15)
D' Abraham comes to the rescue of Sodom and Lot (18:16-19:38)
C' Sarah in foreign palace; ordeal ends in peace and success;
   Abraham and Ishmael part (20:1-21:34)
B' Climax of Abraham's Spiritual Odyssey (22:1-19)
A' Genealogy of Nahor (22:20-24)

This does not leave chap. 26 as an orphan, for that is part of the Jacob cycle, for which Rendsburg essentially reproduces M. Fishbane's work. Again, there is a multimember chiasm, in which chap. 26 ("Interlude: Rebekah in

While not wanting to minimize the importance of this type of analysis, which suggests solutions to a number of important critical problems, it seems to me that it is quite incorrect to conclude from it, as Rendsburg does (quoting Cassuto): "all this shows clearly how out of the material selected from the store of ancient tradition concerning Abraham a homogeneous narrative was created in the text before us, integrated and harmoniously arranged in all its parts and details." This seems to presume that if a narrative can be fit into a chiasm, then it is "harmonious." But it is clear that the chiasm does not solve the chronological problems identified at the beginning of this paper, problems which gave credence to the multiple source hypothesis. Such a statement also seems to imply that an ancient Hebrew reader would tolerate the most blatant contextual discrepancies as long as they were due to a chiastic order being followed. In fact, instead of concluding that the redactor was a genius for constructing this chiasm, we might rather conclude that he was so superficial, driven only by a desire to arrange his material into a chiasm, that he would tolerate the most illogical and incongruous chronological sequences. In short, the structural analysis and the thematic analysis must complement each other.

Two other points should be made about Rendsburg's analysis of the Abraham cycle. First, the consistent chiasm is achieved only by combining sections which seem to be thematically distinct, but which taken separately would not follow the chiastic order (C/C' has three parts and E/E' has two parts, where the inverse order is not followed where it "should" be). This departure from chiasm is somewhat masked by combining the elements under one head, though Rendsburg does discuss the reasons for the varying orders. Perhaps the structure departs from chiasm precisely because Lot and Ishmael depart! Second, such a structural analysis puts the emphasis on finding parallels between members. But as we saw, a key to understanding the relationship between chaps. 12 and 20 is that one left out what is found in the other. Rendsburg is interested in what is common to both, i.e., their redundancy. Overzealousness for parallels can perhaps also be seen in the title, "Rebekah in foreign palace"; Rebekah was not in a foreign palace. As suggested by T. Longman, perhaps the "parallelism" of chiasm should be understood along the lines suggested by Kugel for poetic writings: the A and B lines are not parallel in the sense of equivalent, but complementary, supplementary, etc.

The structure revealed by Rendsburg tends to support the thematic development of this paper in one important respect. I argued that the

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60 Ibid., 45.
61 The suggestion was made in a "Critical Methodologies" class at Westminster Seminary, for which this paper was originally written.
rejuvenation of the patriarchs was due to a connection between the themes of the promise of Isaac and the promise of the land. Both depend on a kind of resurrection for their fulfillment, and the rejuvenation resulting in the birth of Isaac is therefore a token or type of the resurrection in which the land will be inherited. Significantly, in Rendsburg's analysis, the counterpart to the birth of Isaac is not the birth of Ishmael, but the promise of the land.52

IV. Conclusion

The three wife/sister narratives fit in their contexts and play a significant role in the development of the themes of the patriarchal narratives. Apparent contradictions, instead of leading to an exegesis that despairs of trying to make sense out of the narratives as they are, have been shown to bring out these themes. Acceptance of the source and form-critical explanations for these data tend to prevent discovery of their true role. We seem to have reached the point feared by the orthodox redaction critic (one who accepts the results of source criticism as the basis for his work). As J. Barton noted, if redaction criticism is too "successful," it can undermine its own foundations:

The more impressive the critic makes the redactor's work appear, the more he succeeds in showing that the redactor has, by subtle and delicate artistry, produced a simple and coherent text out of the diverse materials before him; the more he also reduces the evidence on which the existence of those sources was established in the first place. No conjurer is required for this trick: the redaction critic himself causes his protege to disappear. . . . if redaction criticism plays its hand too confidently, we end up with a piece of writing so coherent that no division into sources is warranted any longer, and the sources and the redactor vanish together in a puff of smoke, leaving a single, freely composed narrative with, no doubt, a single author.63

In the present case, if our understanding of the laughter in connection with the birth of Isaac is correct, we have done more than simply uncover coherency amid apparent chaos; we have uncovered an author who has played a highly successful joke on readers and scholars down through the centuries.

115 West Sixth Street
Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446

63 Barton, Reading the Old Testament, 57.

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An issue that has taunted mankind through the ages is the question of origins. Since ancient times people have been keenly interested in understanding and explaining their provenance. The ancient creation mythologies of Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India, Iran, Japan, or Mexico,1 or a child's question to his parents about who made the world shows that this concern is intrinsic to human nature.

The Bible clearly portrays God as the Creator of all that exists. In fact this issue is so important in the biblical revelation that it is the first issue addressed, for it is mentioned in the opening lines of Scripture. However, these opening verses have not been understood unilaterally in the history of interpretation. In his book Creation and Chaos, Waltke, after thoroughly investigating existing views, argues that there are three principal interpretations of Genesis 1:1-3 open to evangelicals. He designates these as the restitution theory, the initial chaos theory, and the precreation chaos theory.2 Of primary importance in distinguishing these views is the relationship of Genesis 1:2 to the original creation: "And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." As Waltke stated, "According to the first mode of thought, chaos occurred after the original creation; according to the second mode of thought, chaos

occurred in connection with the original creation; and in the third mode of thought, chaos occurred before the original creation. This article examines the theory of a period of chaos after creation (often called the gap theory) and the initial chaos theory, and the second article in the series analyzes the precreation chaos theory, the view endorsed by Waltke and other recent commentators on Genesis.

The Gap Theory

The restitution theory, or gap theory, has been held by many and is the view taken by the editors of The New Scofield Reference Bible. This view states Genesis 1:1 refers to the original creation of the universe, and sometime after this original creation Satan rebelled against God and was cast from heaven to the earth. As a result of Satan's making his habitation on the earth, the earth was judged. God's original creation was then placed under judgment, and the result of this judgment is the state described in Genesis 1:2: The earth was "formless and void" (ָּבֹה וֹתָה). Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23, which include the only other occurrences of the phrase ָּבֹה וֹתָה, are cited as passages that substantiate the understanding of "formless and void" in Genesis 1:2 in a negative sense, because these words occur in both passages in the context of judgment oracles.

Waltke points out that this view conflicts with a proper understanding of the syntactical function of the waw conjunction in the phrase יָדָה וֹתָה, "and the earth" (Gen. 1:2). The construction of waw plus a noun does not convey sequence but rather introduces a disjunctive clause. The clause thus must be circumstantial to verse 1 or 3. It cannot be viewed as an independent clause ("And the earth became") as held by the supporters of the gap theory.

Furthermore Waltke rejects the proposal that the occurrence of "formless and void" in Jeremiah 4:23 and Isaiah 34:11 proves that Genesis 1:2 is the result of God's judgment. Scripture nowhere states that God judged the world when Satan fell.

3 Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 19.
6 Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 are often cited as biblical support for this teaching.
8 Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 24.
In view of these objections, the gap theory should no longer be considered a viable option in explaining the meaning of Genesis 1:1-3. The view is grammatically suspect, and Scripture is silent on the idea that the earth was judged when Satan fell. Waltke's critique of the gap theory is devastating.9

The Initial Chaos Theory

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. This is the traditional view held by Luther and Calvin, and it is the position mentioned in the renowned Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley Hebrew grammar.10

Waltke argues that this view is unacceptable because it requires that the phrases "the heavens and the earth" in verse 1 and "without form and void" in verse 2 be understood differently from their usual meaning in the Old Testament.11 In the initial chaos theory "the heavens and the earth"12 in verse 1 were created without form and void. However, as Waltke observes, this "demands that we place a different value on 'heaven and earth' than anywhere else in Scripture... Childs concluded that the compound never has the meaning of disorderly chaos but always of an orderly world."13

A second objection proceeds from the first. If verse 2 describes the condition of the earth when it was created, then the phrase "without form and void," which otherwise appears to refer to an orderless chaos, must be understood as referring to what God pro-

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duced along with the darkness and the deep, which likewise have negative connotations.\textsuperscript{14} But this would not be possible in a perfect cosmos. As Waltke argues, "Logic will not allow us to entertain the contradictory notions: God created the organized heaven and earth; the earth was unorganized."\textsuperscript{15} It is also argued that Isaiah 45:18 states explicitly that God did not create a הָרְסָת.

The remainder of this article discusses these objections to the initial chaos theory.

THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

In reference to Waltke's objection concerning the use of the phrase "the heavens and the earth" in Genesis 1:1 one may ask, Must the expression "the heavens and the earth" have the same meaning throughout the canon, especially if the contextual evidence explicitly refers to its formulation? It is a valid question to ask whether the initial reference to the expression in question would have the meaning it did in subsequent verses after the universe had been completed. It should be emphasized that this is the first use of the phrase and one could naturally ask how else the initial stage of the universe might be described. The phrase here could merely refer to the first stage of creation. This idea that Genesis 1:1 refers to the first stage in God's creative activity might be supported by the context, which clearly reveals that God intended to create the universe in progressive stages. Furthermore early Jewish sources attest that the heavens and the earth were created on the first day of God's creative activity.\textsuperscript{16} Wenham nicely articulates this position in addition to replying to the objection raised by Waltke and others:

Here it suffices to observe that if the creation of the world was a unique event, the terms used here may have a slightly different value from elsewhere….Commentators often insist that the phrase "heaven and earth" denotes the completely ordered cosmos. Though this is usually the case, totality rather than organization is its chief thrust here. It is therefore quite feasible for a mention of an initial act of creation of the whole universe (v. 1) to be followed by an account of the ordering of different parts of the universe (vv. 2-31).\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{14} Waltke, \textit{Creation and Chaos}, 24. Waltke and others maintain that Genesis 1:2 refers to something negative. This will be dealt with in the subsequent article, which will analyze the precreation chaos theory more critically.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 26. Similarly, Skinner wrote, "A created chaos is perhaps a contradiction" (Skinner, \textit{A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis}, 13).

\textsuperscript{16} Second Esdras 6:38 and \textit{b. Hag. 12a}. Sailhamer also maintains that Genesis 1:1 was part of the first day of creation. This is the reason the author referred to יָד בֵּית אֵל, "day one" (Gen. 1:5) instead of the expected נֵצָח לֹא, "first day" ("Genesis," 26, 28).

\textsuperscript{17} Wenham, \textit{Genesis 1-15}, 12-13, 15. Also see Eduard Konig, \textit{Die Genesis} (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1925), 136.
This is also Luther's understanding of the meaning of the phrase in Genesis 1:1: "Moses calls 'heaven and earth,' not those elements which now are; but the original rude and unformed substances." If the phrase "the heavens and the earth" does not refer to the completed and organized universe known to subsequent biblical writers, the premise on which Waltke rejects the initial chaos theory is seriously undermined.

FORMLESS AND VOID

As previously mentioned the words הים and הבחב occur together in only three passages in the Old Testament. The word הבחב occurs only in combination with הים, while הים may occur by itself. The most current and comprehensive discussion of the phrase in reference to cognate Semitic languages as well as biblical usage is given by Tsumura:

Hebrew תֹּהוּ is based on a Semitic root *thw and means "desert." The term בֹּהוּ is also a Semitic term based on the root *bhw, "to be empty." . . . The Hebrew term בֹּהוּ means (1) "desert," (2) "a desert-like place," i.e. "a desolate or empty place" or "an uninhabited place" or (3) "emptiness." The phrase תֹּהוּ וָּבֹהוּ refers to a state of "aridness or unproductiveness" (Jer. 4:23) or "desolation" (Isa. 34:11) and to a state of "unproductiveness and emptiness" in Genesis 1:2. Thus both the etymological history and contextual usage of the phrase fail to support Waltke's view that the situation described in Genesis 1:2 is that of a chaotic, unorganized universe. He overstates the force of the phrase "formless and void."

But what about the evidence from Isaiah 45:18? Does not this imply that God was not responsible for creating the state described in Genesis 1:2? The text reads, "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place [ֹתֹהוּ], but formed it to be inhabited)." Does not this passage explicitly state that God


19 David Toshio Tsumura, The Earth and the Waters in Genesis I and 2: A Linguistic Investigation, JSOT Supplement Series 83 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 155-56. See also "הים וָּבֹהוּ," in Encyclopedia Migranj, 8:436 (in Hebrew); and Johann Fischer, Das Buch Isaias. II. Teil: Kapitel 40-66, Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testamentes (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1939), 83. The understanding of הבחב as "empty" is reinforced by the Aramaic Targum rendering of the word as אָרֶץ. The New International Version renders the phrase "formless and empty."
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did not create a ? Waltke and others argue that this parallel passage substantiates the claim that God did not bring about the state described in Genesis 1:2 by His creative powers.20 The answer to this objection appears to be found in the purpose of God's creation as seen in the context of Isaiah 45:18. It could be argued from the context that God created the earth to be inhabited, 21 not to leave it in a desolate condition. Rather than contradicting the initial chaos theory, Isaiah 45:18 actually helps clarify the meaning of ? in Genesis 1:2. Since ? is contrasted with תַּעְרָבָה, "to inhabit," 22 one should conclude that ? is an antonym of "inhabiting." 23 The earth, immediately after God's initial creative act was in a condition that was not habitable for mankind. 24 Tsumura nicely summarizes the contribution of Isaiah 45:18 to the understanding of Genesis 1:2:

tōhû here is contrasted with lasebet in the parallelism and seems to refer rather to a place which has no habitation, like the term semamah "desolation" (cf. Jer. 4:27; Isa. 24:12), hareb "waste, desolate" and 'azubah "deserted." There is nothing in this passage that would suggest a chaotic state of the earth "which is opposed to and precedes creation." Thus, the term tōhû here too signifies "a desert-like place" and refers to "an uninhabited place."… It should be noted that lō-tōhû here is a resultative object, referring to the purpose of God's creative action. In other words, this verse explains that God did not create the earth so that it may stay desert-like, but to be inhabited. So, this verse does not contradict Gen 1:2, where God created the earth to be productive and inhabited though it "was" still tōhû wāh dōhû in the initial state. 25


25 Tsumura, The Earth and the Waters in Genesis I and 2, 33-34. This would also pertain to the phrase in Isaiah 34:11. The threat would be that the land would become a
The early Jewish Aramaic translation Neophyti I provides an early attestation to this understanding in its expansive translation of הָרְסָךְ וְרוֹסִית: "desolate without human beings or beast and void of all cultivation of plants and of trees."\(^{26}\) Tsumura writes, "In conclusion, both the biblical context and extra-biblical parallels suggest that the phrase תוּהִי וַהֲובִֽהוּ in Gen 1:2 has nothing to do with 'chaos' and simply means 'emptiness' and refers to the earth which is an empty place, i.e., 'an unproductive and uninhabited place.'"\(^{27}\) This understanding of verse 2 fits well with the overall thrust and structure of Genesis 1:1-2:3.

As the discourse analysis of this section indicates, the author in v. 2 focuses not on the "heavens" but on the "earth" where the reader/audience stands, and presents the "earth" as "still" not being the earth which they all are familiar with. The earth which they are familiar with is "the earth" with vegetation, animals and man. Therefore, in a few verses, the author will mention their coming into existence through God's creation: vegetation on the third day and animals and man on the sixth day. Both the third and the sixth day are set as climaxes in the framework of this creation story and grand climax is the creation of man on the sixth day. . . . The story of creation in Gen 1:1-2:3 thus tells us that it is God who created mankind "in his image" and provided for him an inhabitable and productive earth.\(^{28}\)

The structure of Genesis 1 shows that God in His creative work was making the earth habitable for man. He did not leave the earth in the initial הָרְסָךְ וְרוֹסִית state. This is seen clearly from the following table, which shows the six days of creation can be divided into two parallel groups with four creative acts each. The last day in each group, days three and six, have two creative acts each with the second creative act on these days functioning as the climax of each. This intentional arrangement shows that making the earth habitable for man is the purpose of the account by improving on the earth's initial status as desolate and empty.\(^{29}\)


\(^{26}\) See Sailhamer, "Genesis," 27.

\(^{27}\) Tsumura, The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2, 156. For a similar understanding in postbiblical Jewish literature, see Jacob Newman, The Commentary of Nahmanides on Genesis Chapters 1-6 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 33.

\(^{28}\) Tsumura, The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2, 42-43. Also see Sailhamer, "Genesis," 24-25.

\(^{29}\) Many commentators have observed this general structure (e.g., U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, trans. Israel Abrahams [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961], 17; Ross, Creation and Blessing, 104; and Wenham, Genesis 1-15). The present chart most closely resembles Sarna, Genesis: JPS Torah Commentary, 4.
The Six Days of Creation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waste</th>
<th>Empty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Light</td>
<td>4 Luminaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sky</td>
<td>5 Fish and fowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Dry land</td>
<td>6 Land creatures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>Humankind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lowest form of organic life) (Highest form of organic life)

This supports the claim that לְוַעַל is restricted to the earth's unlivable and empty condition before these six days. God converted the uninhabitable land into a land fit for man. He was not seeking to reverse it from a chaotic state. This is the point Isaiah 45:18 supports by presenting habitation as the reverse of לְוַעַל. The sequence in Isaiah 45:18 parallels that of Genesis 1. There is movement from an earth unfit to live in (Gen. 1:2 = Isa. 45:18a) to the finished product, to be inhabited by man (Gen. 1:3-31 Isa. 45:18b).

However, what of Waltke's objection that a perfect God would not make a world that was "formless and void." This charge loses its force when one considers the creation account itself. For one could also ask why God did not make the universe perfect with one command. He surely could have done so. And yet there was a progression, for He spent six days changing the state described in Genesis 1:2 into the world as it is now known. As Sarna has stated, "That God should create disorganized matter, only to reduce it to order, presents no more of a problem than does His taking six days to complete creation instead of instantaneously producing a perfected universe."30

Conclusion

This article has analyzed Waltke's treatment of two principal evangelical interpretations of Genesis 1:1-3—the gap theory and the initial chaos theory. Waltke's criticism of the gap theory is legitimate, as this theory conflicts with principles of Hebrew grammar. On the other hand Waltke objected to the initial chaos theory based on his understanding of the phrases "the heavens and the earth" and "formless and void." However, as has been shown, these phrases can be understood differently from the way Waltke understands them, so that the so-called initial chaos theory should not be dismissed on the basis of Waltke's objections to it. The subsequent article will critique the increasingly popular position advocated by Waltke and others, the precreation chaos theory.

Genesis 1:1-3: 
Creation or Re-Creation?

Part 2 (of 2 parts)

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In the preceding article in this series,1 two options regarding the interpretation of Genesis 1:1-3--the restitution theory and the initial chaos theory--were examined. The present article examines the precreation chaos theory, which has been extensively argued and advocated by Waltke in his work, Creation and Chaos.2 The four major theses of the precreation chaos view are these: (1) Genesis 1:1 constitutes a summary statement, (2) the Hebrew verb קָם in Genesis 1:1 should not be understood as creation out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo), (3) Genesis 1:2 describes something that is not good, (4) the Israelite view of creation is distinct among the other cosmogonies of the ancient Near East.

Precreation Chaos Theory

The first feature of the precreation chaos view concerns the grammatical understanding of Genesis 1:1-3. The opening statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," is viewed as an independent clause3 that functions as a summary statement for

2 Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974).
the narrative that ends in Genesis 2:3. The first line of evidence Waltke puts forth for this rendering is the parallel structure in the subsequent Genesis narrative, Genesis 2:4-7. Waltke argues that the narrative account of Genesis 2:4-7 is parallel to the construction of Genesis 1:1-3 in the following way: (1) Introductory summary statement (Gen. 1:1 = 2:4). (2) Circumstantial clause (1:2 = 2:5-6). (3) Main clause (1:3 = 2:7). In addition, a similar structure is employed in the introduction to Enuma Elish, an important cosmological text from Mesopotamia. Waltke concludes, "The evidence therefore, seems overwhelming that we should construe verse 1 as a broad, general, declaration of the fact that God created the cosmos, and that the rest of the chapter explicates this statement. Such a situation reflects normal Semitic thought which first states the general proposition and then specifies the particulars." 7

A second important tenet for the precreation chaos theory concerns the meaning of the verb ḫēḇā' "to create," in Genesis 1:1. Waltke argues that ḫēḇā' does not necessarily mean "creation out of nothing" and that the ancient versions did not understand this to be the meaning of ḫēḇā'. Thus Waltke concludes, "From our study of the structure of Rev. [sic] 1:1-3 I would also conclude that bārā' in verse 1 does not


5 Waltke also cites the narrative that begins in Genesis 3:1 as having an analogous grammatical structure, though it lacks the initial summary statement (Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 32-33).


7 Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 33.

8 Ibid., 49.
include the bringing of the negative state described in verse 2 into existence. Rather it means that He utilized it as a part of His creation. In this sense He created it." In addition, "no mention is made anywhere in Scripture that God called the unformed, dark, and watery state of verse 3 [sic] into existence." In addition, "no mention is made anywhere in Scripture that God called the unformed, dark, and watery state of verse 3 [sic] into existence."

The third interpretive feature proceeds from and is intrinsically linked with the immediate discussion of the meaning of \( \text{XRABA} \). Because Waltke dismisses the possibility of *creatio ex nihilo* in Genesis 1:1, he says God was not responsible for the state of affairs described in verse 2. Waltke argues that verse 2 seems to depict something negative, if not sinister. "The situation of verse 2 is not good, nor is it ever called good. Moreover, that state of darkness, confusion, and lifelessness is contrary to the nature of God in whom there is no darkness. He is called the God of light and life; the God of order." A perfectly holy God would not be involved in creating or bringing such a condition into existence. Furthermore other passages such as Psalm 33:6, 9 and Hebrews 11:3 refer to God creating by His word, which in the Genesis narrative does not begin until verse 3. No mention is made in Scripture of God's calling the chaotic state described in Genesis 1:2 into existence. Deep and darkness "represented a state of existence contrary to the character of God." Moreover, in the eschaton the negative elements of Genesis 1:2, the sea and the darkness, will be removed in the perfect cosmos (Rev. 21:1, 25). This transformation that will occur at the world's consummation substantiates the fact that the darkness and the sea are less than desirable and hence not the result of God's creative activity. The existence of this imperfect state in Genesis 1:2, Waltke says, reinforces the view that verse 2 is subordinate to verse 3 and not to verse 1:

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

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9 Ibid., 50.
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.\textsuperscript{15}

The fourth tenet of the precreation chaos theory concerns the distinctiveness of the Israelite view of creation in contrast with other ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies. While Waltke maintains that there is some similarity between the pagan cosmogonies and the Genesis account of creation, such as the existence of a dark primeval formless state prior to creation,\textsuperscript{16} he maintains that the Genesis account is distinctive in three ways: (1) the belief in one God, (2) the absence of myth and ritual to influence the gods, and (3) the concept of God as Creator, which means that the creation is not coexistent and coeternal. This belief in God as Creator separate and above His creation "was the essential feature of the Mosaic faith"\textsuperscript{17} and "distinguished Israel's faith from all other religions."\textsuperscript{18} Waltke comments on the apologetic need to have a word from Moses about the origin of creation in the ancient Near Eastern setting. "If, then, the essential difference between the Mosaic faith and the pagan faith differed precisely in their conceptualization of the relationship of God to the creation, is it conceivable that Moses should have left the new nation under God without an accurate account of the origin of the creation?"\textsuperscript{19}

**Evaluation of the Precreation Chaos Theory**

"GENESIS 1:1 IS A SUMMARY STATEMENT"

In relation to the first line of evidence for viewing Genesis 1:1 as a summary statement, it should be noted that while the correspondence between 1:1-3 and 2:4-7 is indeed similar, it is not exact. Not only is the relationship and correspondence between 2:4b and 2:7 different from the relationship and correspondence between 1:1 and 1:3, but also the lengthy circumstantial clauses in Genesis 2:4b-6 indicate that the styles of the two narratives are distinct.\textsuperscript{20} Furthermore Waltke argues that beginning a narrative with a summary statement

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\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 221.
\textsuperscript{16} Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 44.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 43.
and then filling in the details is commonplace in Semitic thought. He does not, however, supply references to support this generalization. Beginning a narrative with a summary statement is, in any case, a literary device that is evident in Indo-European literature as well as in literature stemming from Semitic authors. Pearson summarizes the evidence against the view, that Genesis 1:1 should be taken as a summary.

The first verse of Gen 1 cannot be regarded with Buckland and Chalmers as a mere heading of a whole selection, nor with Dods and Bush as a summary statement, but forms an integral part of the narrative, for: (1) It has the form of narrative, not of superscription. (2) The conjunctive particle connects the second verse with it; which could not be if it were a heading. No historical narrative begins with "and" (vs. 2). The "and" in Ex. 1:1 indicates that the second book of Moses is a continuation of the first. (3) The very next verse speaks of the earth as already in existence, and therefore its creation must be recorded in the first verse. (4) In the first verse the heavens take the precedence of the earth, but in the following verses all things, even sun, moon, and stars seem to be appendages to the earth. Thus if it were a heading it would not correspond with the narrative... the above evidence supports the view that the first verse forms a part of the narrative. The first verse of Genesis records the creation of the universe in its essential form. In v. 2, the writer describes the earth as it was when God's creative activity had brought its material into being, but this formative activity had not yet begun.

In the summary-statement view of Genesis 1:1, grammatical structure is intricately connected to the interpretation of the phrases "heavens and earth" (v. 2) as the completed heavens and earth and "formless and void" as the antithesis of creation. In the previous article these interpretations were shown to be open to serious question. In addition Waltke asserts that the subordination of Genesis 1:2 to verse 3 should not be viewed as an anomaly, arguing that Young listed several illustrations of the circumstantial clause preceding the main verb. This evidence is problematic, however, as none of

22 Anton Pearson, "An Exegetical Study of Genesis 1:1-3," *Bethel Seminary Quarterly* 2 (1953): 20-21. Hasel argues that the waw conjunction that begins Genesis 1:2 is an argument against understanding verse 1 as a summary statement. The importance of the copulative waw of verse 2a is given its full due by linking verse 1 and verse 2 closer together than is possible with the position which considers verse 1 as merely a summary introduction expressing the fact that God is Creator of heaven and earth (Hasel, "Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1: A Critical Look," 165). Also see Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: Tyndale; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 44.
23 Rooker, "Genesis 1:1-3: Creation or Re-Creation? Part 1."
the examples cited has the same structure as Genesis 2:2-3, that is, a waw disjunctive clause followed by waw consecutive prefixed form.25 On the other hand it seems that such passages as Judges 8:11 and Jonah 3:3 are more helpful parallels to the grammatical structure reflected in Genesis 1:1-2, where a finite verb is followed by a waw disjunctive clause containing the verb הָיָה. This clause qualifies a term in the immediately preceding independent clause. The independent clause makes a statement and the following circumstantial clause describes parenthetically an element in the main clause. This would confirm the traditional interpretation that verse 1 contains the main independent clause, with Genesis 1:2 consisting of three subordinate circumstantial clauses describing what the just-mentioned earth looked like after it was created.

"НЫВ IN GENESIS 1:1 IS NOT CREATIO EX NIHILO"

The second important feature of the precreation chaos theory is the assertion that the Hebrew root נִיהוּ, "to create," should not be understood as creation out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo) in Genesis 1:1. This semantic understanding is critical for the precreation chaos theory, since it maintains that what is described in Genesis 1 is not the original creation but rather a re-creation of the raw material that exists in Genesis 1:2.

The cognate of the Hebrew root נִיהוּ is rare in the Semitic cognate languages, and thus its meaning in the Old Testament must be determined from its usage in the Old Testament corpus.26 Finley has recently provided a thorough examination of the usage and meaning of the term.27

The verb נִיהוּ is applied to the creation of a nation, to righteousness, to re-generation, and to praise and joy..... Nearly two-thirds of the instances of נִיהוּ refer to physical creation. . . . God's original creation encompassed all of heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1).... Fully one-third of all the citations of physical creation refer to the creation of man (including Gen. 1:27; 5:1-2; 6:7; Deut. 4:32; Ps. 89:47 [Heb. 48]; Eccles. 12:1; Isa. 45:12..... In the Genesis 1 account of creation נִיהוּ is used only five times, and of these occurrences three are in a single verse and refer to the creation of man (1:27).... The verb is also used of the creation of the great sea monsters (Gen. 1:21).

227, Waltke erroneously states that the list of examples of this grammatical phenomenon is in E. J. Young, Studies in Genesis One (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964), 15. The references are actually found on page 9, n. 15.

25 The passages Young lists are Genesis 38:25; Numbers 12:14; Joshua 2:18; 1 Samuel 9:11; 1 Kings 14:17; 2 Kings 2:23; 6:5,26; 9:25; Job 1:16; and Isaiah 37:38 (ibid., 9).

26 It may be that the lack of cognates with this root in other Semitic languages confirms the term's uniqueness. Other Hebrew words for "create" have broader cognate evidence.

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The Israelites greatly feared these creatures, and it was reassuring to know that their God had created them and is Lord over them.28

In the examination of the occurrences of this verb some salient observations emerge. First, the only subject of the verb in the Hebrew Bible is God. Whereas God may be the subject for the semantic synonyms of \( \text{xrABA} \), these synonyms have other subjects (creatures) in addition to God.29 "A number of synonyms, such as 'make,' 'form,' or 'build,' are used of creation by God, but \( \text{xrABA} \) is the only term for which God is the only possible subject."30 Usage supports the contention that the Hebrew verb \( \text{xrABA} \) is the distinct word for creation.

The Hebrew stem \( b-r-^2 \) is used in the Bible exclusively of divine creativity. It signifies that the product is absolutely novel and unexampled, depends solely on God for its coming into existence, and is beyond the human capacity to reproduce. The verb always refers to the completed product, never to the material of which it is made.31

Furthermore since the verb never occurs with the object of the material, and since the primary emphasis of the word is on the novelty of the created object, "the word lends itself well to the concept of creation \text{ex nihilo}."32 This idea is reinforced by the fact that even when the context clearly indicates that what is being created involves preexisting material, that material will not be mentioned in the same sentence with \( \text{xrABA} \).33 Since this Hebrew verb has a semantic

28 Ibid., 411-12. See also Ross, Creation and Blessing, 725-28, and Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 14.
29 As Ross states, "Humans may make ['asa], form [yasar], or build [bana]; to the Hebrew, however, God creates" (Creation and Blessing, 105-6).
30 Finley, "Dimensions of the Hebrew Word for 'Create' (\( \text{xrABA} \))," 409.
32 Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, s.v. " \( \text{xrABA} \) " by Thomas E. McComiskey, 127.
34 Passages such as Genesis 1:27 and Isaiah 45:7 would be examples of the usage not meaning \text{creatio ex nihilo}. These were noted by the medieval Hebrew exegete Ibn Ezra. See Pearson, "An Exegetical Study of Genesis 1:1-3," 17.
range, as do most other biblical Hebrew verbs, the context of any particular usage becomes determinative for meaning.\textsuperscript{34} In Genesis 1 there is no explicit connection of this creative activity with any pre-existing materials.\textsuperscript{35} As Leupold aptly states, "When no existing material is mentioned as to be worked over, no such material is implied."\textsuperscript{36} Thus this lexeme is distinct and is the best lexical choice to express the unprecedented concept of \textit{creatio ex nihilo}.\textsuperscript{37} As the Jewish exegete Nahmanides wrote, "We have in our holy language no other term for 'the bringing forth of something from nothing' but \textit{bara}."\textsuperscript{38} Waltke's argument that the verb does not inherently mean \textit{creatio ex nihilo} is besides the point, as it is doubtful that any word in any language does.\textsuperscript{39} The point is that while this is not the inherent meaning of this word or of any word, for that matter, \textit{רקב} would be the best candidate from the semantic pool of Hebrew verbs for expressing a creation that is unprecedented, namely, \textit{creatio ex nihilo}. Sarna nicely summarizes the significance of the use of the verb \textit{רקב} in Genesis 1:1 as meaning \textit{creatio ex nihilo} in the larger cultural context of the ancient Near East.

Precisely because of the indispensable importance of preexisting matter in the pagan cosmologies, the very absence of such mention here is highly significant. This conclusion is reinforced by the idea of creation by divine

\textsuperscript{34} Both Kidner and Ross specifically mention the importance of context for determining the meaning of \textit{רקב} for an individual passage (Kidner, \textit{Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary}, 44; Ross, \textit{Creation and Blessing}, 728).

\textsuperscript{35} Finley, "Dimensions of the Hebrew Word for 'Create' (\textit{רקב})," 410. This would be true even if one agreed with Waltke and understood verse 1 to be a summary statement. If the verse functions in this manner, it would be logically separated from its context in that it referred in a general way to the entire process of Genesis 1. In addition in Waltke's view Genesis 1:2 is subordinated to verse 3, leaving verse 1 as an independent clause, which does not contain any reference to materials being used with a \textit{רקב} creation.

\textsuperscript{36} Leupold, \textit{Exposition of Genesis}, 40-41.


\textsuperscript{38} Jacob Newman, \textit{The Commentary of Nahmanides on Genesis Chapters 1-6} (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 33. Similarly, Young, "The Relation of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three," 139. Winden argues that understanding Genesis 1:1 as referring to \textit{creatio ex nihilo} was considered the orthodox understanding of the verse by the early church fathers (J. C. M. van Winden, "The Early Christian Exegesis of 'Heaven and Earth' in Genesis 1,1," in \textit{Romanitas et Christianitas}, ed. W. den Boer, P. G. van der Nat, C. M. J. Sicking, and J. C. M. van Winden [Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1973], 372-73).

\textsuperscript{39} See George Bush, \textit{Notes on Genesis}, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: James & Klock, 1976), 1:26-27. Hence Waltke's objection that the ancient versions did not understand the verb in this way is undermined. Furthermore Waltke's statement that other Hebrew verbs may describe \textit{creatio ex nihilo} does not diminish the fact that \textit{רקב} as the distinctive verb for creation, having God as its only subject, also may dearly have this nuance (Waltke, \textit{The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3}, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1," 336-37).
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fiat without reference to any inert matter being present. Also, the repeated biblical emphasis upon God as exclusive Creator would seem to rule out the possibility of preexistent matter. Finally, if bara' is used only of God's creation, it must be essentially distinct from human creation. The ultimate distinction would be creatio ex nihilo, which has no human parallel and is thus utterly beyond all human comprehension. 40

Also the contextual joining of the verb בָּרָא, "to create," with the preceding phrase בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים (berēšīt bārā) clarifies the connotation of each and thus helps elucidate the meaning of בָּרָא.

The word "beginning" is, of course, a relative term. It must imply the beginning of something. On that account, some say it refers only to the beginning of human history that we see unfolded round about us. But the content of the term is given to us by the word bara', create, and vice versa. This is a beginning that is characterized by creation, and this is a creation that is characterized by the beginning. Here it means "the absolute beginning."... It refers to the absolute beginning, just as John, beginning his Gospel, takes over the phrase "in the beginning" and refers it to the absolute beginning. 41

As noted, Waltke avoids attributing the meaning of creatio ex nihilo to בָּרָא in Genesis 1. Thus God's role as Creator in that chapter refers only to His reshaping preexisting matter. And yet if Moses wanted to refer to God as the Reshaper of existing matter, there were better lexical choices at his disposal to convey this idea. It does not seem that he would want to employ the distinctive verb for God's creative activity, the verb בָּרָא. In his attempt to play down the distinctiveness of the verb בָּרָא Waltke mentions that other verbs that are not as distinctive as בָּרָא may refer to creation out of nothing. 42 It almost seems that what Waltke really wants to say about the distinctiveness of בָּרָא is that it never means creation out of nothing. 43

The use of בָּרָא without any mention of preexisting matter in Genesis 1:1 conveys something stronger than Waltke's interpretation of the verse. 44

40 Sarna, Genesis, 5. Creatio ex nihilo was also distinct from Greek philosophy. See especially Plutarch's denial of creatio ex nihilo (John Dillon, The Middle Platonists [London: Duckworth, 1977], 207, cited by Young, "Creatio Ex Nihilo': A Context for the Emergence of the Christian Doctrine of Creation," 139-40). See also Winden, "The Early Christian Exegesis of 'Heaven and Earth' in Genesis 1,1," 372-73.
41 Young, In the Beginning, 24-25.
42 Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 50.
43 Westermann's caveat that "we should be careful of reading too much into the word; nor is it correct to read creatio ex nihilo out of the word" may be appropriate here (Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 100).
44 Hasel, "Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1:: A Critical Look," 165. The occurrence of the verb following the phrase "in the beginning" gave rise to the Jewish and Christian traditions of creatio ex nihilo (Wifall, "God's Accession Year according to P," 527).
"GENESIS 1:2 IS NEGATIVE"

The precreation chaos theory advocated by Waltke assumes that the chaotic state of Genesis 1:2 was in existence before God began His creative activity in Genesis 1:3.\(^{45}\) The contention that the state described in verse 2 is negative and consequently not the result of the activity of God was addressed in the previous article in connection with the phrase הַמַּעֲרַכָּה הָאָרֶץ ("formless and empty"). There it was shown that the phrase הַמַּעֲרַכָּה הָאָרֶץ need not be understood as an orderless chaos as Waltke proposed but rather that the earth was not yet ready to be inhabited by mankind.\(^{46}\) As Tsumura stated, "There is nothing in this passage that would suggest a chaotic state of the earth which is opposed to and precedes creation."\(^{47}\)

But what of Waltke's objection that the darkness over the face of the deep also suggests the antithesis of creation and thus was not brought into existence by God? The significance of this occurrence of darkness is conveyed more forcefully by Unger.

Of special importance in the seven-day account of creation is the calling forth of light upon the earth about to be renewed. Sin had steeped it in disorder and darkness. God's active movement upon it in recreation involved banishing the disorder and dissipating the darkness.... Only when sin came, darkness resulted. Darkness, therefore, represents sin, that which is contrary to God's glory and holiness (1 John 1:6).\(^{48}\)

Waltke maintains that the presence of the uncreated state with darkness over the deep in Genesis 1:2 is a mystery, since the "Bible

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\(^{45}\) Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 19. Similarly, Hershel Shanks, "How the Bible Begins," Judaism 21 (1972): 58, n. 2. In reference to this assumption Waltke states that chaos occurred before the original creation. What does he mean by original here? If matter is already in existence, then subsequent creation should not be viewed as original. The same applies to his use of the term "creation." He speaks of preexisting matter in existence before God began to work in Genesis 1 and yet he calls the work that of creation. Similarly, in discussing Isaiah 45:18 Waltke states, "The Creator did not leave His job half-finished. He perfected the creation, and then He established it. He did not end up with chaos as Isaiah noted" (*Creation and Chaos*, 60). When Waltke says that God "did not leave His job unfinished," he seems to be arguing that God was involved in bringing the state described in Genesis 1:2 into existence. On the other hand, elsewhere he indicates that the presence of the state described in verse 2 is a mystery, as the Bible never says that God brought the unformed state, the darkness, and the deep into existence by His word (*Creation and Chaos*, p. 52).


\(^{48}\) Merril F. Unger, "Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115 (1958): 30. Payne suggests that if the author had desired to make a statement about the darkness expressing evil, the stronger word for darkness would be used. The darkness is הַשָּׁבְעָה, not the stronger synonym הָרָעַפִּים (D. F. Payne, "Approaches to Genesis i 2," *Transactions* 23 [1969-70]: 67.)
never says that God brought these into existence by His word."\(^{49}\)

The problems that arise with this view are more numerous and difficult than the theological problem its advocates are attempting to alleviate. First, the immediate question arises, To what should be ascribed the existence of the darkness over the face of the deep?\(^{50}\) Who made the darkness and the deep if they were not made by God? The fact is noteworthy that God named the darkness in Genesis 1 without the least indication that there was something undesirable about its existence.

God gives a name to the darkness, just as he does to the light. Both are therefore good and well-pleasing to him; both are created, although the express creation of the darkness, as of the other objects in verse two, is not stated, and both serve his purpose of forming the day.\(^{51}\)

Later in the same article Young addresses the theological tension felt by Waltke.

In the nature of the case darkness is often suited to symbolize affliction and death. Here, however, the darkness is merely one characteristic of the unformed earth. Man cannot live in darkness, and the first requisite step in making the earth habitable is the removal of darkness. This elementary fact must be recognized before we make any attempt to discover the theological significance of darkness. And it is well also to note that darkness is recognized in this chapter as a positive good for man. Whatever be the precise connotation of the וָכָּלָה of each day, it certainly included darkness, and that darkness was for man's good.\(^{52}\)

Waltke states that the darkness and the deep were not brought into existence by God's word, and yet Isaiah 45:7 states that God created the darkness. In this verse וָכָּלָה, the same word used for darkness in Genesis 1:2, is said to have been created (אֱלֹהִים) by God.\(^{53}\)

\(^{49}\) Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 52.

\(^{50}\) Wiseman, as quoted by Bruce, suggests that this position leads to an inevitable comparison with pagan views (F. F. Bruce, "Arid the Earth Was without Form and Void," *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 78 [1946]: 26). Westermann notes that the opposition between darkness and creation is widespread in the cosmogonies and creation stories of the world (Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 104). The connection between the *Enuma Elish* account of creation because of the similarity between the Hebrew word וָכָּלָה ("deep") and the name of the goddess Tiamat is not etymologically defensible (see Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 105; and Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 107).


\(^{52}\) Ibid., 170-71, n. 33. Waltke does acknowledge that the darkness from this context must later be viewed as good. "Though not called 'good' at first, the darkness and deep were called 'good' later when they became part of the cosmos" (Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1," 338-39). The explanatory phrase, "became part of the cosmos," is difficult to understand, and it should be admitted there is no explicit support to this effect from the context.

\(^{53}\) Wiseman, "And the Earth Was without Form and Void," 26.
To disassociate the physical darkness mentioned in Genesis 1:2 from God because darkness came to symbolize evil and sin is to confuse the symbol with the thing symbolized. It is like saying yeast is evil because it came to represent spiritual evil. The fact that a physical reality is used to represent something spiritual does not mean that every time this physical reality is mentioned, it must be representing that spiritual entity. Those who claim that darkness in Genesis 1:2 is evil have confused the spiritual symbol as used elsewhere with the physical reality in this passage.

In addition the syntactical structure of verse 2 would seem to argue against understanding the verse in a negative tone. The three clauses in the verse each begin with a waw followed by a noun that functions as the subject of the clause. All the clauses appear to be coordinate. Waltke would not view the last phrase describing the Spirit of God hovering over the waters in a negative sense, and yet he does not offer an explanation for not treating all the clauses in verse 2 as parallel. As Keil and Delitzsch state, "The three statements in our verse are parallel; the substantive and participial construction of the second and third clauses rests upon the הָיוִּים of the first. All three describe the condition of the earth immediately after the creation of the universe." The presence of darkness illustrates, as does the preceding clause, "formless and empty," that the earth was still not ready to be inhabited by man.

As the first word in this clause הָיוִּים is emphasized, it stands as a parallel to הָיוִּים in the previous clause. There are thus three principal subjects of the verse: the earth, darkness and the Spirit of God. The second clause in reality gives further support to the first. Man could not have lived upon the earth, for it was dark and covered by water.

Waltke's argument that the state in Genesis 1:2 was not created by God because passages like Psalm 33:6, 9 and Hebrews 11:3 state that God created everything by His word is not convincing. Indeed, it should be observed that these passages do not in any way suggest that the universe was created in two distinct stages, a creation and

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56 Keil and Delitzsch, *Pentateuch*, 1:49. Also see Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 102, 106, and Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled*, 83-84. Since the three clauses are coordinate, Westermann and Schmidt would argue that they should be viewed in the same light, either positively or negatively. See Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 17, and Payne, "Approaches to Genesis 1.2," 66.
58 Young, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2," 170.
and a re-creation, as Waltke must maintain. Furthermore where is the evidence in these passages for the presence of preexisting matter before the re-creation of Genesis 1:3?

Verse 2 should be taken as a positive description, not a negative one. And though the earth was not yet suitable for man to inhabit, there is no reason, so far as one can tell from reading the first chapter of Genesis, why God might not have pronounced the judgment, 'very good,' over the condition described in the second verse.

According to the traditional interpretation, as noted in the previous article, however, Genesis 1:2 states the condition of the earth as it was when it was first created until God began to form it into the present world.

"THE ISRAELITE VIEW OF CREATION IS DISTINCT"

In stressing the importance and significance of creation in Israelite theology Waltke wants to distinguish the Old Testament concept of creation from the creation mythologies of the ancient Near East. Because other accounts explaining the origin of the world were prevalent and would probably have been known to the Israelites, Waltke states that it would have been "inconceivable that Moses should have left the new nation under God without an accurate account of the origin of creation." The essential difference between the pagan ideas and the Mosaic revelation is in the "conceptualization of the relationship of God to creation." Numerous scholars have noted, for example, that the other cosmogonies of the ancient Near East have nothing so profound as the opening statement of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But why is this so unique? Part of the answer

60 Wiseman, cited in Bruce, "And the Earth Was without Form and Void," 26.
61 Westermann, Genesis 1-11, 94,102; Young, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2," 170; Sailhamer, "Genesis," 24; and Augustine who along with other ancient scholars understood the darkness in Genesis 1:1 as a reference to heaven (Winden, "The Early Christian Exegesis of 'Heaven and Earth' in Genesis 1,1," 378).
62 Young, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2," 174. Childs and Hasel suggest that the verse must be viewed in a negative light if one argues that Genesis 1:1 is merely a summary statement (Bervard S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament [Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1960], 39, and Hasel, "Recent Translations of Genesis 1:1: A Critical Look," 165). Childs also hints at the need to play down the significance of בֵּית in Genesis 1:2 as indicating something negative (ibid., 40).
63 Young, "The Relation of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three," 144 and n. 20.
64 Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 43.
65 Ibid.
surely lies in the fact that these mythologies all assume preexisting matter when the god(s) begin to create. In other words the uniqueness of the phrase "in the beginning" is not primarily in its distinctiveness literally but in the fact that no other creation account in the ancient Near East described the absolute beginning of creation when nothing else existed. Though Waltke would deny the eternality of matter, he opens the door to the idea of preexisting matter in Genesis 1 by saying the creation account in Genesis 1 assumes that physical existence is present at "the beginning." Since Waltke does not believe that Genesis 1 refers to the initial creation before the existence of matter, his statement about the distinctiveness of Israel's view loses force, even though God as Creator is fundamental to the Israelite faith.

What then is distinctive about the meaning of the Mosaic revelation of creation according to Waltke's interpretation of the passage? According to Waltke the account begins with a watery chaos already in existence, which God overcomes. This is virtually identical to the sequence of events in the Babylonian Enuma Elish. The

Waltke, however, does speak of the Creator bringing the universe into existence by His command in Genesis 1 (Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1," 338). It is unclear what Waltke means by existence here, since the precreation chaos theory of Genesis 1 describes God's transforming activity of the already existing physical state described in Genesis 1:2. Similarly in contrasting the purpose of Psalm 104 with Genesis 1, he states that Genesis refers to "the origin of the creation" ("The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part V: The Theology of Genesis 1-Continued," 35). Yet Genesis 1 does not refer to the original creation in the same sense as Psalm 33 and Hebrews 11, according to Waltke's interpretation.

Gabrini has well noted the inevitable conclusions that must be drawn, particularly in regard to the existence of matter, by those who adhere to the translation "in the beginning." He writes, "At this point, the current interpretation of the first sentence of Genesis requires some consideration. When we translate 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' we meet two difficulties. First of all, we lend the Jewish writer the Christian conception of creation ex nihilo: such conception is totally missing among the peoples of the ancient Orient, where creation by gods always displays itself in a shapeless but existing world, so that creation ex nihilo in Genesis would appear truly baffling. In the second place, if we admit that God created the world ex nihilo (heaven and earth are two complementary parts to indicate the whole), then we are obliged to admit also that the creation took place in two different moments. Firstly, God created the world in the darkness; secondly, he began to create forms" (Giovanni Gabrini, "The Creation of Light in the First Chapter of Genesis," in Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies, ed. Pinchas Peli (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1969), 1:2).

The existence of matter at the beginning of creation could easily be understood as the principle of evil coexisting with God from eternity, hence denying the Judeo-Christian concept of God (Winden, The Early Christian Exegetics of 'Heaven and Earth' in Genesis 1,1," 372-73).

Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 58. Waltke does maintain that one of the purposes of the Mosaic account is a polemic against the myths of Israel's environment (Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1," 328).

Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 45.
creative activity of God described in Genesis 1 is limited to a sculpturing or reshaping of material that is chaotic and unorganized.

In distinguishing Israel's view of creation from the creation accounts of the ancient Near East, Waltke states, "The faith that God was the Creator of heaven and earth and not coexistent and coeternal with the creation distinguished Israel's faith from all other religions." This theological deduction, however, cannot come from Genesis 1, according to the precreation chaos position. Such a credo could only result from a belief in *creatio ex nihilo*, a doctrine Waltke denies the Israelite consciousness until several hundred years later.

While the degree of distinctiveness should not be a controlling exegetical grid to impose on a passage (the interpreter should objectively investigate what the text is saying in its historical and literary context), it is fair to bring out that the traditional view of creation is more distinctive in the environment of the ancient Near East than is Waltke's precreation chaos theory. The key difference between pagan cosmogonies and Genesis 1 is *creatio ex nihilo* and the absence of preexisting matter. Waltke can claim neither fact for Genesis 1, though he views Genesis 1 as the most significant text regarding the Israelite theology of creation. Jacob brings into focus more clearly the distinctiveness of the Israelite account of creation in Genesis 1.

It is the first great achievement of the Bible to present a divine creation from nothing in contrast to evolution or formation from a material already in existence. Israel's religious genius expresses this idea with monumental brevity. In all other creation epics the world originates from a primeval matter which existed before. No other religion or philosophy dared to take this last step. Through it God is not simply the architect, but the absolute master of the universe. No sentence could be better fitted for the opening of the Book of Books. Only an all pervading conviction of God's absolute power could have produced it.

Conclusions

In this article the four primary features of the precreation chaos theory were examined. It was concluded that these four precepts pose philological as well as theological difficulties. The conclusion

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71 Ibid., 49.
72 Furthermore, Fields observes that Waltke had not considered the impact of passages such as Exodus 20:11; 31:17; and Nehemiah 9:6, which fit all that exists in the universe within the six days of creation (Unformed and Unfilled, 128, n. 43).
73 Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 19.
should be drawn, therefore, that the traditional view, defended in the previous article in this two-part series, is the most satisfactory position regarding the interpretation of Genesis 1:1-3. According to this position, the Bible speaks with one voice about the creation of the universe. Genesis 1:1-3 describes the same events as other passages such as Psalm 33:6, 9; Romans 4:17; and Hebrews 11:3, and they describe *creatio ex nihilo*. This understanding of Genesis 1:1-3 prevailed among the early Jewish and Christian interpreters. Genesis 1:2 describes the initial stage of what God created, the state He then transformed (vv. 3-31) to make the earth into a place that could be inhabited by man.

The first article in this series began by acknowledging that the question of origins is a question repeated in history and in human experience. This truth was graphically illustrated after NASA'S Cosmic Background Explorer satellite-COBE-shot back pictures of the most distant objects scientists have ever discovered. These pictures were alleged to reveal evidence of how the universe began. Ted Koppel of "ABC News Nightline" questioned Robert Kirshner, chairman of Harvard University's department of astronomy on the significance of this discovery by asking a question about origins.

**Ted Koppel:** The big bang theory, to what limited degree I understand it, calls for something infinitesimally small, so small that it cannot be measured to have exploded into the universe as we now find it, in other words, something tiny exploded into the reality of everything large that exists in the universe today. Now, how does that work?

**Robert Kirshner:** Well, you're trying to answer the hardest part at the beginning. It might be easier to think about some of the observational facts and see why the big bang is such a simple explanation for them. The thing that we see today is a universe which is expanding,

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75 Waltke labeled the view as the initial chaos view, but because of the uncertainty of what is meant by chaos this title is not so useful as referring to the position simply as the traditional one. See Young, "The Relation of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three," 145. Indeed, Waltke's recent assertion that Genesis 1:2 depicts an earth that was uninhabitable and uninhabited may indicate a shift in his own thinking about the meaning of the chaos. See "The Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One," 4.


77 For references in apocryphal literature as well as early Jewish interpreters and church fathers, see Wifall, "God's Accession Year according to P," 527; Young, "'Creatio Ex Nihilo': A Context for the Emergence of the Christian Doctrine of Creation," 145; Pearson, "An Exegetical Study of Genesis 1:1-3," 24-26; and Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled*, 26.

galaxies getting farther from one another, and if you imagine what that was like in the past, it would be a picture in which the galaxies were getting closer to one another. And if you take that picture far enough back, and we think the time scale is about 15 billion years, far enough back, then you get to a state where the universe is much hotter and denser than it is today. That's the thing we're talking about when we talked about the big bang. The details of exactly the structure of space and time at that—in that setting are a little tricky, but the basic picture is that the universe that we see today is very old, and had come from a state which was very different than we see around us today.79

At the conclusion of the program Koppel, unsatisfied with the previous evasion to the essential question, returned the central issue of the origin of the universe:

Ted Koppel: And in the 40 or 50 seconds that we have left, Professor Kirshner, you want to try another crack at that first question, how we get everything out of next to nothing?

Dr. Kirshner: No, I don't think that's the question I really want to answer. That's the one I want to evade....80

The question that is asked by both ancient and modern man alike—the question that cannot be ignored—is answered adequately only from the revelation of Scripture. God created all that exists and He created out of nothing.

The Bible is unified on this issue. God is the Creator who existed before all His creation and who brought forth from nothing all that exists. The only biblical event that might rightly be called a re-creation begins with the experience of the new birth and is consummated in the realization of the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1-2). This work from beginning to end is brought about by the One who was there "in the beginning," who creates and brings light and life through the redemption victoriously proclaimed on the first day of the week.81

79 Ibid., 2.
80 Ibid., 4.
The bizarre little story in Genesis 9:18-27 about Noah's drunkenness and exposure along with the resultant cursing of Canaan has perplexed students of Genesis for some time. Why does Noah, the spiritual giant of the Flood, appear in such a bad light? What exactly did Ham do to Noah? Who is Canaan and why should he be cursed for something he did not do? Although problems like these preoccupy much of the study of this passage, their solutions are tied to the more basic question of the purpose of the account in the theological argument of Genesis.

Genesis, the book of beginnings, is primarily concerned with tracing the development of God's program of blessing. The blessing is pronounced on God's creation, but sin (with its subsequent curse) brought deterioration and decay. After the Flood there is a new beginning with a renewal of the decrees of blessing, but once again corruption and rebellion leave the human race alienated and scattered across the face of the earth. Against this backdrop God began His program of blessing again, promising blessing to those obedient in faith and cursing to those who rebel. The rest of the book explains how this blessing developed: God's chosen people would become a great nation and inherit the land of Canaan. So throughout Genesis the motifs of blessing and cursing occur again and again in connection with those who are chosen and those who are not.

An important foundation for these motifs is found in the oracle of Noah. Ham's impropriety toward the nakedness of his father prompted an oracle with far-reaching implications. Ca-
naan was cursed; but Shem, the ancestor of Israel, and Japheth were blessed. It seems almost incredible that a relatively minor event would have such major repercussions. But consistently in the narratives of Genesis, one finds that the fate of both men and nations is determined by occurrences that seem trivial and commonplace. The main characters of these stories acted on natural impulse in their own interests, but the narrator is concerned with the greater significance of their actions. Thus it becomes evident that out of the virtues and vices of Noah's sons come the virtues and vices of the families of the world.¹

The purpose of this section in Genesis, then, is to portray the characteristics of the three branches of the human race in relation to blessing and cursing. In pronouncing the oracle, Noah discerned the traits of his sons and, in a moment of insight, determined that the attributes of their descendants were embodied in their personalities.² Because these sons were primogenitors of the families of the earth, the narrator is more interested in the greater meaning of the oracle with respect to tribes and nations in his day than with the children of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.³

Shem, the ancestor of the Shemites to whom the Hebrews belonged, acted in good taste and was blessed with the possession of the knowledge of the true God, Yahweh. Japheth, the ancestor of the far-flung northern tribes which include the Hellenic peoples,⁴ also acted properly and thus shared in the blessing of Shem and was promised geographical expansion. In contrast, Ham, represented most clearly to Israel by the Egyptians and Canaanites, acted wrongly in violating sexual customs regarded as sacred and as a result had one line of his descendants cursed with subjugation.⁵

So the oracle of Noah, far from being concerned simply with the fortunes of the immediate family, actually pertains to vast movements of ancient peoples.⁶ Portraying their tendencies as originating in individual ancestors, the book of beginnings anticipates the expected destinies of these tribes and nations. Vos fittingly notes that it occurred at a time when no event could fail to influence history.⁷

**The Prologue (Gen. 9:18-19)**

Genesis 9:18-19 provides not only an introduction to this narrative but also a literary bridge between the Flood narrative
and the table of nations. The reader of Genesis is already familiar with the listing of the main characters of this story: Noah and his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth (5:32; 6:10; 7:13; 9:1; and later in 10:1). But in this passage two qualifications are supplied. They were the sons of Noah who came out of the ark, and they were the progenitors from whom all the nations of the earth originated. The first description connects the characters to the Flood account, and the second relates them to the table of nations.

Of greater significance for the present narrative, however, is the circumstantial clause in verse 18, "Now Ham was the father of Canaan." Many have thought that this is a primary example of a redactor's attempt to harmonize the deed of Ham and the curse of Canaan portions of this narrative. If that were the case, it could have been done more effectively without leaving such a rough trace. The point of this clause seems rather to show the connection of Canaan with Ham. However, far from being merely a genealogical note, which would be superfluous in view of chapter 10, the narrative is tracing the beginnings of the family and shows that Ham, acting as he did, revealed himself as the true father of Canaan. The immediate transfer of the reference to Canaan would call to the Israelite mind a number of unfavorable images about these people they knew, for anyone familiar with the Canaanites would see the same tendencies in their ancestor from this decisive beginning. So this little additional note anticipates the proper direction in the story.

The Event (Gen. 9:20-23)

NOAH'S BEHAVIOR

The behavior of Noah after the Flood provided the occasion for the violation of Ham. Noah then acted so differently from before the Flood that some commentators have suggested that a different person is in view here. But the text simply presents one person. The man who watched in righteousness over a wicked world then planted a vineyard, became drunk, and lay naked in his tent. Or, as Francisco said it, "With the opportunity to start an ideal society Noah was found drunk in his tent."

This deterioration of character seems to be consistent with the thematic arrangement of at least the early portion of Genesis, if not all of the book. Each major section of the book has the heading "אלהים תולדות", commonly translated "these are the genera-
tions of." The narratives that follow each heading provide the particulars about the person, telling what became of him and his descendants. In each case there is a deterioration from beginning to end. In fact the entire Book of Genesis presents the same pattern: The book begins with man (Adam) in the garden under the blessing of God, but ends with a man (Joseph) in a coffin in Egypt. The תורן of Noah began in 6:9 with the note that Noah was righteous and blameless before the LORD, and ended in 9:18-27 with Noah in a degraded condition. But it was a low experience from which God would bring brighter prospects in the future.

Noah, described as a "man of the soil" (9:20), began by planting a vineyard. This epithet (יהוהש) is probably designed to say more than that he was a human farmer. In view of the fact that he is presented as the patriarch of the survivors of the Flood, Noah would be considered as the master of the earth, or as Rashi understood it, the lord of the earth. The two verbs (ש gouver ... לחר) in the sentence are best taken as a verbal hendiadys, "he proceeded to plant" a vineyard. Whether he was the first man in history to have done so is not stated, but he was the first to do so after the Flood. The head of the only family of the earth then produced the vine from the ground that previously produced minimal sustenance amid thorns.

The antediluvian narratives represent various beginnings, none of which appear particularly virtuous. Besides Noah's beginning in viticulture, the first "hunter" is mentioned in 10:8. Nimrod was the first (ליהו) "to be a mighty warrior on the earth." And in 11:6, concerning the activities of Babel, the text reads, "they have begun (تعبير) to do this." The use of the same verb in all these passages provides an ominous note to the stories.

The planting of the vineyard, however, appears to be for Noah a step forward from the cursed ground. Since Lamech, Noah's father, toiled under the curse, he hoped that his son would be able to bring about some comfort (5:29) and so he called him Noah, which means "comfort." Perhaps Noah hoped that cheer and comfort would come from this new venture.

The vine in the Bible is considered noble. The psalmist described the vine as God's provision, stating that it "gladdens the heart of man" (104:15). A parable in Judges has a vine saying, "Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and men?" (9:13). Not only did the fruit of the vine alleviate the pain of the cursed, but also it is the symbol of coming bliss in the Messianic
The curse of Canaan

Zechariah 8:12 and Isaiah 25:6 describe the future age by employing this idea. But while it may be that wine alleviates to some degree the painful toil of the ground, the Old Testament often warns of the moral dangers attending this new step in human development. Those taking strong vows were prohibited from drinking wine (Num. 6); and those assuming responsible positions of rulership were given the proverbial instruction that strong drink is not for kings, but for those about to die (Prov. 31:4-5).

The story of Noah shows the degrading effects of the wine - drunkenness and nakedness. No blame is attached in this telling of the event, but it is difficult to ignore the prophetic oracles that use nakedness and drunkenness quite forcefully. Habakkuk, for one, announced, "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies" (2:15). Jeremiah also used the imagery for shame and susceptibility to violation and exploitation, lamenting, "You will be drunk and stripped naked" (Lam. 4:21).

Since the prophets view drunkenness and nakedness as signs of weakness and susceptibility to shameful destruction, many have condemned Noah's activities. The Talmud records that Noah was to be considered righteous only when compared with his wicked generation. All that Rashi would say was that Noah degraded himself by not planting something else. Most commentators at least view it as an ironic contrast in Noah's character if not an activity that is in actual disharmony with the picture of the man given earlier.

On the other hand there have been many who have attempted to exonerate Noah in one way or another. Medieval Jews took it in an idealistic way, saying that Noah planted the vine in order to understand sin in a better way and thus to be able to warn the world of its effects. Various scholars have tried to free Noah from blame by viewing the passage as an "inventor saga." Noah, the inventor of wine, was overpowered by the unsuspected force of the fruit and experienced the degradation of the discovery.

Cohen takes the exoneration a step further. Observing that the motif of wine in the ancient world was associated with sexuality, he argues that Noah was attempting to maintain his procreative ability to obey the new commission to populate the earth. To substantiate his view, Cohen drew on the analogy of Lot with his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38) and David with Uriah and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:12-13), since wine was used in each case to promote
sexual activity. Cohen acclaims the old man for playing the role so well.

It cannot be denied that wine has been used in connection with sex. However, Cohen's theory, no matter how fascinating, must be rejected as a highly speculative interpretation. It is more plausible to proceed on clear evidence and to take a normal, sensible approach. Later biblical allusions show drunkenness and nakedness to be shameful weaknesses, often used figuratively for susceptibility before enemies. Noah is thus not presented in a good light.

In view of this, it appears that along with the primary intent of the narrative to set the stage for the oracle, the passage also presents a polemic against pagan mythology. The old world saw Armenia as the original home of wine, but Egyptian literature attributed the invention of wine to the god Osiris, and Greek literature attributed it to Dionysius. The Genesis account, by contrast, considers the beginning of wine and its effect on man as less than divine. It has the trappings of depravity. Cursing and slavery, rather than festive joy, proceed from its introduction into the world. Any nation delighting in the vices of wine and nakedness, this polemic implies, is already in slavery.

HAM'S VIOLATION

Noah's condition prompted the sin of his son Ham. Ham, who again is said to be the father of Canaan, "saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside" (9:22). They in response carefully came in and covered the old man. When Noah learned what Ham had done to him, he cursed Canaan but he blessed Shem and Japheth.

What did Ham do that was serious enough to warrant such a response? One answer is that Ham did nothing at all to deserve such a blistering curse. Many writers believe that two traditions have been pieced together here, one about Ham and another about Canaan. Rice asserts, "All the tensions of Gen. 9:18-27 are resolved when it is recognized that this passage contains two parallel but different traditions of Noah's family." In fact he states that no interpretation that considers the story to be a unity can do justice to the text. But it must be noted in passing that positing two traditions in no way solves the tension; instead it raises another. If the parts of the story were from two irreconcilable traditions, what caused them to be united? To assert that two differing accounts were used does not do justice to the final,
fixed form of the text. The event was obviously understood to be
the basis of the oracle which follows in 9:24-27.

Some commentators attempt to reconstruct what took place.
Figart suggests that Ham and his brothers came to see Noah, and
that Ham went in alone, discovered his father's condition, and
reported it to his brothers who remedied the situation. Figart's
point is that there was no sin by Ham. He suggests that Canaan,
the youngest, must have been responsible for the deed that in-
curred the curse.

But it seems clear enough that the story is contrasting Ham,
the father of Canaan, with Shem and Japheth regarding seeing or
not seeing the nakedness. The oracle curses Ham's descendant,
but blesses the descendants of Shem and Japheth. If Canaan
rather than Ham were the guilty one, why was Ham not included
in the blessing? Shufelt, suggesting also that Canaan was the
violator, reckons that Ham was reckless. But it seems that the
narrative is placing the violation on Ham.

Many theories have been put forward concerning this viola-
tion of Ham. Several writers have felt that the expression "he saw
his nakedness" is a euphemism for a gross violation. Cassuto
speculates that the pre-Torah account may have been uglier but
was reduced to minimal proportions. Greek and Semitic stories
occasionally tell how castration was used to prevent procreation
in order to seize the power to populate the earth. The Talmud
records that this view was considered by the Rabbis: "Rab and
Samuel [differ], one maintaining that he castrated him, and the
other that he abused him sexually." The only possible textual
evidence to support such a crime would come from Genesis 9:24,
which says that Noah "found out what his youngest son had done
to him. " But the remedy for Ham's "deed" is the covering of Noah's
nakedness. How would throwing the garment over him without
looking undo such a deed and merit the blessing?

Bassett presents a view based on the idiomatic use of the
words "uncover the nakedness." He suggests that Ham engaged
in sexual intercourse with Noah's wife, and that Canaan was
cursed because he was the fruit of that union. He attempts to
show that to "see another's nakedness" is the same as sexual
intercourse, and that a later redactor who missed the idiomatic
meaning added the words in 9:23.

But the evidence for this interpretation is minimal. The ex-
pression הַעֲרָה הַבָּרָה is used in Scripture for shameful exposure,
mostly of a woman or as a figure of a city in shameful punishment,
exposed and defenseless. This is quite different from the idiom used for sexual violation, יָרָה יָד הָעֵצַּת, "he uncovered the nakedness." It is this construction that is used throughout Leviticus 18 and 20 to describe the evil sexual conduct of the Canaanites. Leviticus 20:17 is the only occurrence where יַצֵּל is used, but even that is in a parallel construction with יָרָה, explaining the incident. This one usage cannot be made to support Bassett's claim of an idiomatic force meaning sexual intercourse.

According to Genesis 9 Noah uncovered himself (the stem is reflexive). If there had been any occurrence of sexual violation, one would expect the idiom to say, "Ham uncovered his father's nakedness.” Moreover, Rice observes that if Ham had committed incest with his mother, he would not likely have told his two brothers, nor would the Torah pass over such an inauspicious beginning for the detested Canaanites (see Gen. 19:30-38).31

So there is no clear evidence that Ham actually did anything other than see the nakedness of his uncovered father. To the writer of the narrative this was apparently serious enough to incur the oracle on Canaan (who might be openly guilty in their customs of what Ham had been suspected of doing).

It is difficult for someone living in the modern world to understand the modesty and discretion of privacy called for in ancient morality.32 Nakedness in the Old Testament was from the beginning a thing of shame for fallen man. As a result of the Fall, the eyes of Adam and Eve were opened, and, knowing they were naked, they covered themselves. To them as sinners the state of nakedness was both undignified and vulnerable.33 The covering of nakedness was a sound instinct for it provided a boundary for fallen human relations.

Nakedness thereafter represented the loss of human and social dignity. To be exposed meant to be unprotected; this can be seen by the fact that the horrors of the Exile are couched in the image of shameful nakedness (Hab. 3:13; Lam. 1:8; 4:21). To see someone uncovered was to bring dishonor and to gain advantage for potential exploitation.

By mentioning that Ham entered and saw his father's nakedness the text wishes to impress that seeing is the disgusting thing. Ham's frivolous looking, a moral flaw, represents the first step in the abandonment of a moral code. Moreover this violation of a boundary destroyed the honor of Noah.

There seems to be a taboo in the Old Testament against such "looking" that suggests an overstepping of the set limits by iden-
The Curse of Canaan

The object seen (Gen. 19:26; Exod. 33:20; Judg. 13:22; 1 Sam. 6:19). Ham desecrated a natural and sacred barrier by seeing his father's nakedness. His going out to tell his brothers about it without thinking to cover the naked man aggravated the unfilial act.  

Within the boundaries of honor, seeing the nakedness was considered shameful and impious. The action of Ham was an affront to the dignity of his father. It was a transgression of sexual morality against filial piety. Because of this breach of domestic propriety, Ham could expect nothing less than the oracle against his own family honor.

SHEM'S AND JAPHETH'S REVERENCE

Shem and Japheth acted to preserve the honor of their father by covering him with the garment (Gen. 9:23). The impression is that Ham completed the nakedness by bringing the garment out to his brothers.

The text is very careful to state that the brothers did not see their father's nakedness. Their approach was cautious, their backs turned to Noah with the garments on their shoulders. In contrast to the brevity of the narrative as a whole this verse draws out the story in great detail in order to dramatize their sensitivity and piety. The point cannot be missed--this is the antithesis of the hubris of Ham.

The Oracle (Gen. 9:24-27)

With the brief notice that Noah knew what his youngest son had done to him, the narrative bridges the event and the oracle. The verb הָבַע would suggest either that Noah found out what had transpired or that he knew intuitively. Jacob suggests that "the different ways of his sons must have been known to him." Certainly Noah knew enough to deliver the oracle, as Jacob much later had such knowledge about his sons (Gen. 49).

The essence of the oracle is the cursing of Canaan: "Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers." Even when the blessings are declared for the brothers, the theme of Canaan's servitude is repeated both times.

The very idea of someone cursing another raises certain questions as to the nature of the activity. Scharbert points out that (a) the curse was the reaction of someone to the misbehavior of another in order to keep vigorously aloof from that one and his
deed; (b) the one cursed was a subordinate who by the cursing would be removed from the community relationship in which he had enjoyed security, justice, and success; (c) the curse was no personal vendetta but was used to defend sacral, social, and national regulations and customs; and (d) the curse was effected by divine intervention.  

In the ancient world the curse was only as powerful as the one making it. Anyone could imprecate, but imprecation was the strongest when supernatural powers were invoked. The Torah had no magical ideas such as sorcery and divination (Exod. 22:17-18). The curse found its way into Israel as part of an oath to protect its institutions. One who committed a serious transgression against covenant stipulations was delivered up to misfortune, the activation of which was Yahweh's (Deut. 28; Josh. 6:26; 1 Sam. 26:19).

So the curse was a means of seeing that the will of Yahweh was executed in divine judgment on anyone profaning what was sacred. It is an expression of faith in the just rule of God, for one who curses has no other resource. The word had no power in itself unless Yahweh performed it. Thus it was in every sense an oracle. God Himself would place the ban on the individual, thus bringing about a paralysis of movement or other capabilities normally associated with a blessing.

In this passage the honor of Noah and the sanctity of the family, one of God's earliest institutions, are treated lightly and in effect desecrated. Noah, the man of the earth, pronounced the oracle of cursing. It is right, and Yahweh will fulfill it.

The second part of verse 25 specifies the result of the curse—abject slavery. This meant certain subjugation, loss of freedom for autonomous rule, and reduction to bondage. A victor in war would gain dominion over the subjugated people so that they might be used as he pleased. However, in the Old Testament slaves were to be treated favorably, protected by law, and even freed in the sabbatical year (Exod. 21:2, 20).

But Noah was not content to give a simple pronouncement of Canaan's slavery. By using the superlative genitive ("servant of servants"), he declared that the one who is cursed is to be in the most abject slavery. Canaan would serve his "brothers" (normally understood to refer to Shem and Japheth since the main idea of the curse is repeated in the next lines).

The fact that Canaan, and not Ham, received the curse has prompted various explanations. Of course there are those, as
already discussed, who posit separate traditions and see two distinct stories that were later fused into a single account. Others have found reason for excusing Ham on the basis of the blessing in 9:1. Not only would it be unusual for a person to curse what God had blessed, but also one would not normally curse his own son. While this may partially explain Noah's choice, it cannot be the whole explanation.

Kidner sees the principle of talionic justice in the passage. For Ham's breach of family, his own family would falter and that through the youngest. But is it right to curse one for the action of another?

The Torah does incorporate this measure-for-measure judgment from one generation to another, but in such cases the one judged is receiving what he deserves. A visitation of the sins of the fathers on later generations will be on those who hate Yahweh (Exod. 20:4). A later generation may be judged for the sin of an ancestor if they are of like mind and deed. Otherwise they may simply bear the fruit of some ancestor's sin.

It is unlikely that Canaan was picked out for cursing just because he was the youngest son of Ham. On the contrary, the Torah, which shows that God deals justly with all men, suggests that Noah saw in him the evil traits that marked his father Ham. The text has prepared the reader for this by twice pointing out that Ham was the father of Canaan. Even though the oracle would weigh heavily on Ham as he saw his family marred, it was directed to his descendants who retained the traits.

In this regard it must be clarified that Canaan the people, not the man, are in view for the fulfillment of the oracle. The names Canaan, Shem, and Japheth all represent the people who were considered their descendants. So by this extension the oracle predicts the curse on the Canaanites and is much wider than a son's being cursed for his father, although the oracle springs from that incident in the family. Therefore the oracle is a prophetic announcement concerning the future nations. To the Hebrew mind, the Canaanites were the most natural embodiment of Ham. Everything they did in their pagan existence was symbolized in the attitude of Ham. From the moment the patriarchs entered the land, these tribes were there with their corrupting influence (Gen. 13:18; 15:16; 18:32; 19; 38).

The Torah warned the people of the Exodus about the wickedness of the Canaanites in terms that call to mind the violation of Ham (Lev. 18:2-6). There follows a lengthy listing of such vile
practices of the Canaanites (18:7-23) that the text must employ euphemisms to represent their deeds ("nakedness" alone is used twenty-four times). Because of these sins the Canaanites were defiled and were to be driven out before the Israelites.

The constant references to "nakedness" and "uncoversing" and even "seeing" in this passage, designating the people of Canaan as a people enslaved sexually, clearly reminds the reader of the action of Ham, the father of Canaan. No Israelite who knew the culture of the Canaanites could read the story of their ancestor Canaan without making the connection. But these descendants of Ham had advanced far beyond his violation. The attitude that led to the deed of Ham came to full fruition in them.

Archaeology has graphically illustrated just how debased these people were. Bright writes, "Canaanite religion presents us with no pretty picture .... Numerous debasing practices, including sacred prostitution, homosexuality, and various orgiastic rites, were prevalent." Wright and Filson add that "the amazing thing about the gods, as they were conceived in Canaan, is that they had no moral character whatever. In fact, their conduct was on a much lower level than that of society as a whole, if we can judge from ancient codes of law.... Worship of these gods carried with it some of the most demoralizing practices then in existence." Albright appropriately adds to this observation.

It was fortunate for the future of monotheism that the Israelites of the conquest were a wild folk, endowed with primitive energy and ruthless will to exist, since the resulting decimation of the Canaanites prevented the complete fusion of the two kindred folk which would almost inevitably have depressed Yahwistic standards to a point where recovery was impossible. Thus, the Canaanites, with their orgiastic nature worship, their cult of fertility in the form of serpent symbols and sensuous nudity, and their gross mythology, were replaced by Israel, with its nomadic simplicity and purity of life, its lofty monotheism, and its severe code of ethics.

So the text is informing the reader that the Canaanite people, known for their shameless depravity in sexual matters and posing a continual threat to Israel's purity, found their actual and characteristic beginning in Ham. Yet these descendants were not cursed because of what Ham did; they were cursed because they acted exactly as their ancestor had. That moral abandon is fully developed in the Canaanites. The oracle announces the curse for this.

In actual fact Noah was supplicating God to deal with each group of people as they deserved, to the ancestor and descendants
alike. Since this request was in harmony with God's will for the preservation of moral purity, He granted it. If the request had not been in harmony, Noah's curse would have had no result.

Canaan, then, is the prototype of the population that succumbed to enervating influences and was doomed by its vices to enslavement at the hands of hardier and more virtuous races. Because Ham, the "father" of Canaan, had desecrated the honor of his father by seeing his uncovered nakedness, this divine and prophetic oracle is pronounced on the people who would be known for their immorality in a shameful way, a trait discernible in this little story in the history of beginnings.

The blessing aspect is given to Shem, but the wording is unexpected: "Blessed be the LORD [Yahweh], the God of Shem." The emphasis on the possession of God by his name is strengthened in this line in a subtle way. Delitzsch says, "Yahweh makes himself a name in becoming the God of Shem, and thus entwines His name with that of Shem, which means 'name.'"

By blessing one's God, the man himself is blessed. The idea is that Shem will ascribe his good fortune to Yahweh his God, for his advantage is not personal merit; his portion is Yahweh. The great line of blessing will be continued through Shem from Noah to Abram, the man of promise.

Here again, however, the point of the oracle looks to the descendants. It would then be clear to Israel, who found themselves in such a personal, covenantal relationship with Yahweh, that they were the heirs of this blessing.

The announcement of Japheth's share in the blessing of Shem is strengthened by the play on his name "Japheth" (יָפֵת), from the verb "to enlarge." Here too the descendants are in mind, for they will expand and spread out in the world. The second part of this verse is the resultant wish that Japheth will dwell in the tents of Shem. This is most likely an expression of the prospect of peaceful cohabitation. Certainly the prospect of this unification is based on the harmony of the ancestors in the story. As a partner in covering up Noah, Japheth's descendants are granted alliance with Shem in the subjugation of Canaan.

The church fathers saw this as the first sign of the grafting in of the Gentiles in spiritual blessings, but later revelation speaks more of that. All that can be said of Genesis 9:27 in the oracle is that peaceful tenting of Japheth with Shem was a step toward that further ideal blessing.
The Epilogue (Gen. 9:28-29)

The narrative, as well as the חָקֵם, ends with verses 28 and 29 supplying the final note of the genealogy of Noah, the last name on the table of Genesis 5. A new חָקֵם begins in chapter 10.

The essential part of this narrative is most certainly the oracle, and the dominant feature of that oracle is the cursing of the Canaanites. They are doomed to perpetual slavery because they followed in the moral abandon of their distant ancestor. Their subjugation would be contrasted by the blessing on the others: Shem has spiritual blessings by virtue of knowing Yahweh; Japheth has temporal blessings with the prospect of participation with Shem.

The curse narrative of Genesis 9 immediately precedes the listing of the families and their descendants in Genesis 10; if there were any question as to whom the narrator had in mind, the lines could be traced immediately.

Japheth, whose expansion was already anticipated in the oracle, represented the people who dominated the great northern frontier from the Aegean Sea to the highlands of Iran and northward to the steppes beyond the shores of the Black Sea. Those best known to the writer were the Hellenic peoples of the Aegean coastlands.

Shem also is pictured as expanding, dwelling in tents. The oracle looks beyond the ancestor to his descendants, among whom were the Hebrews. It would be difficult to understand the narrator's assuming Yahweh to be covenanted with any other people. The possession of the blessing would be at the expense of the Canaanites whom Israel would subjugate, thus actualizing the oracle.

Canaan represents the tribes of the Canaanites who were considered to be ethnically related to the other Hamites, but were singled out for judgment because of their perverse activities. The curse announced that they would be enslaved by other tribes, a subjugation normally accomplished through warfare.

On the whole, this brief passage expresses the recoiling of Israelite morality at the licentious habits engendered by a civilization that through the enjoyment and abuse of wine had deteriorated into an orgiastic people to whom nothing was sacred. In telling the story, the writer stigmatizes the distasteful practices of these pagans.
Being enslaved by their vices, the Canaanites were to be enslaved by others. This subjugation, effected through divine intervention, is just: the moral abandon of Ham ran its course in his descendants.

It is not possible to take the oracle as an etiology, answering the questions as to why the Canaanites had sunk so low, or why they were enslaved by others. At no time in the history of Israel was there a complete subjugation of Canaan. Many cities were conquered, and at times Canaanites were enslaved, but Israel failed to accomplish her task. These Canaanites survived until the final colony at Carthage was destroyed in 146 B.C. by the Romans. So there was really no time in the history of Israel to fit a retrospective view demanded by an etiology.

Rather, the oracle states a futuristic view in broad, general terms. It is a sweeping oracle announcing in part and imprecating in part the fate of the families descending from these individuals. It is broad enough to include massive migrations of people in the second millennium as well as individual wars and later subjugations.

The intended realization, according to the design of the writer, would be the period of the conquest. Israel was called to conquer the Canaanites. At the same time as the Israelite wars against the Canaanites (down through the battle of Taanach), waves of Sea Peoples began to sweep through the land against the Hittites, Canaanites, and Egyptians. Neiman states, "The Greeks and the Israelites, willy-nilly, were allies against the Canaanites and the Hittites during the great world conflict which came down through the historical memory of many peoples by many different names." In their invasions these people from the north sought to annex the coastal territory and make homes for themselves. Israel felt herself in the strongest moral contrast to the Canaanites (as Shem had felt to Ham). Any help from the Japhethites would be welcomed. Such a spirit of tolerance toward the Gentiles would not have been possible in the later period of Israel's history. Thus the curse oracle would have originated at a time before the Conquest, when the Canaanites were still formidable enemies.

In all probability the event and its oracle were recorded to remind the Israelites of the nature and origin of the Canaanites, to warn them about such abominations, and to justify their subjugation and dispossession through holy warfare. Israel received the blessing, but Canaan received the curse.
Notes

2 Arthur C. Custance attempts to classify the characteristics of the major races in connection with this oracle (*Noah's Three Sons* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975], p. 43). It seems to this writer that much of the discussion goes beyond the evidence.
3 The second oracle in Genesis based on the character traits of sons comes at the end of the patriarchal material (Gen. 49).
10 Skinner, Genesis, p. 181.
13 The terms used in the passage reflect the description in Genesis 3.
14 Christ's first sign (John 2), changing water to wine, announces the age to come.
15 Sanhedrin 108a, 70a and b.
16 Isaiah and Sharfmen, Genesis, p. 85.
19 Zohar, 1:248.
21 This view was proposed by Origen and Chrysostom earlier.
27 The Torah found the account repulsive, Israelite conscience found it shocking, and it was not right to attribute such an act to Noah (Cassuto, *From Noah to Abraham*, pp. 150-52).
The Curse of Canaan

28 According to Philo Byblius, a legend among the Canaanites said El Kronos used a knife to prevent his father from begetting children.
29 Sanhedrin 70a. The Midrash here also tries to explain the problem by saying that a lion took a swipe at Noah on leaving the ark and destroyed him sexually, and that Ham discovered it.
34 Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, p. 151.
35 Calvin wrote, "Ham alone eagerly seizes the occasion of ridiculing and inveighing against his father; just as perverse men are wont to catch at occasions of offence in others, which may serve as a pretext for indulgence in sin" (Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, 2 vols. [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 19481, 1:302).
36 Kidner sees this as the reverse of the fifth commandment, which makes the national destiny pivot on the same point - a call to uphold God's delegated authority (Derek Kidner, Genesis [Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1967], p. 103).
37 This idea of "seeing the nakedness" as a gross violation of honor is also related by Herodotus in the story of Gyges, who when seeing the nakedness of Candaules' wife - which Herodotus said was a shame among the Lydians - either had to kill Candaules or be killed himself (Herodotus 1:8).
38 It seems to this writer that the listing of "Shem, Ham and Japheth" is not chronological. According to Genesis 9:24 Ham is the youngest of the three, and according to 10:21 Shem is the older brother of Japheth. So the proper order would be Shem, Japheth, and Ham. (However, the New International Version's translation of 10:21 suggests that Japheth was the older brother of Shem, in which case the order would be Japheth, Shem, and Ham. But either way Ham is still the youngest.)
39 Jacob, Genesis, p. 68.
40 Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament, s.v. by Josef Scharbert, 1:408-12.
45 Jacob, Genesis, p. 68. In Genesis 27 the patriarch Jacob could not change the blessing he had given.
46 Kidner, Genesis, p. 104.
47 Dillmann, Genesis, p. 305.
51 Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, p. 154.
52 Skinner, Genesis, p. 185.
54 Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 133.
56 Figart correctly affirms that "there is not one archaeologist, anthropologist, or Biblical scholar who has ever associated the Canaanites with Negroid stock. Canaan is listed in Genesis 10:15-19 as the father of eleven tribes, all Caucasoid with no Negro characteristics" (*A Biblical Perspective on the Race Problem*, p. 55).
57 Neiman, "The Date and Circumstances of the Cursing of Canaan," p. 126.
58 Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 63.
60 Neiman, "The Date and Circumstances of the Cursing of Canaan," p. 131.

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Studies in the Life of Jacob
Part 2:

Jacob at the Jabbok,
Israel at Peniel

Allen P Ross

Introduction

Why is it that many people of God attempt to gain the blessing of God by their own efforts? Faced with a great opportunity or a challenging task, believers are prone to take matters into their own hands and use whatever means are at their disposal. In it all there may even be a flirtation with unscrupulous and deceptive practices--especially when things become desperate.

Jacob was much like this. All his life he managed very well. He cleverly outwitted his stupid brother--twice, by securing the birthright and by securing the blessing. And he eventually bested Laban and came away a wealthy man--surely another sign of divine blessing. Only occasionally did he realize it was God who worked through it all; but finally this truth was pressed on him most graphically in the night struggle at the ford Jabbok.

By the River Jabbok Jacob wrestled with an unidentified man till dawn and prevailed over him, and though Jacob sustained a crippling blow, he held on to receive a blessing once he perceived that his assailant was supernatural (Gen. 32:22-32). That blessing was signified by God's renaming the patriarch "Israel," to which Jacob responded by naming the place "Peniel." But because he limped away from the event, the "sons of Israel" observed a dietary restriction.

Gunkel, comparing this story with ancient myths, observes that all the features--the attack in the night by the deity, the
mystery involved, the location by the river, the hand-to-hand combat--establish the high antiquity of the story.\(^1\) It is clear that the unusual elements fit well with the more ancient accounts about God's dealings with men. To be sure, something unusual has been recorded, and the reader is struck immediately with many questions, some of which probably cannot be answered to any satisfaction.\(^2\) Who was the mysterious assailant? Why was he fighting Jacob and why was he unable to defeat the patriarch? Why did he appear afraid of being overtaken by the dawn? Why did he strike Jacob's thigh? Why was the dietary taboo not included in the Mosaic Law? What is the meaning of the name "Israel"? What is the significance of this tradition?

Von Rad warns against the false expectations of a hasty search for "the" meaning, for he along with many others is convinced that a long tradition was involved in forming and interpreting the record.\(^3\) A survey of the more significant attempts to understand the present form of the text will underscore the difficulties.

**INTERPRETATIONS**

Several interpreters have suggested that this is a dream narrative. Josephus understood it to be a dream in which an apparition (\(φαντάσμα\)) made use of voice and words.\(^4\) Roscher followed the same basic idea, but said that it was a case of incubation, induced by the obstruction of the organs of respiration, producing a vivid dream of a struggle like that of mortals with Pan Ephialtes in antiquity.\(^5\)

Others have given the story an allegorical interpretation. Philo saw a spiritual conflict in literal terms, a fight of the soul against one's vices and passions.\(^6\) Jacob's combatant was the Logos; it was his virtue that became lame for a season. This allegorical approach was accepted in part by Clement of Alexandria; he said that the assailant was the Logos, but understood that the Logos remained unknown by name in the conflict because He had not yet appeared in flesh.\(^8\)

Beginning with Jerome, many have understood the passage to portray long and earnest prayer. Schmidt relates how Umbreit, reacting to the concept of a fight with the Almighty, expanded this view to say it was a prayer that involved meditation in the divine presence, confession of sin, desire for pardon and regeneration, and yearning for spiritual communion.\(^9\)

Jewish literature, however, recognizes that an actual fight is at the heart of the story. R. Hanna b. R. Hanina said it was a real
struggle but with the prince or angel of Esau. Rashi followed this explanation, and the Zohar (170a) named the angel Samael, the chieftain of Esau.

The passage has proved problematic for critical analysis as well. Schmidt explains, "The usual criteria fail. Yahwe does not occur at all, not even on the lips of the renamed hero. Elohim is found everywhere, but in a way that would not be impossible even to a writer usually employing the name Yahwe. The words and phrases generally depended on by the analysis are not decisive." As a result there has been little agreement among critical scholars. Knobel, Dillmann, Delitzsch, and Roscher assigned the passage to E (Elohim sources in the documentary hypothesis). And DeWette, Hupfeld, Kuenen, Studer, Wellhausen, Driver, Skinner, Kautzsch, Procksch, and Eichrodt assigned it to J. Some of these, however, gave Genesis 32:23 and 29 to E, and verse 32 to a glossator. W Max Muller tried to explain the confusion over the sources as being due to the disguising of the main features. He argued that the language of verse 25a was ambiguous—the low blow should have been struck by Jacob. The weeping in Hosea's account (12:4) should then be referred to the angel (according to Meyer). In short, a solution of sorts was found in the suggestion that the record had been revised in tradition.

Gunkel attempted to muster evidence from within the narrative to show that two recensions of an old story had been put together: (1) verse 25a records that the hip was dislocated by a blow, but verse 25b suggests that it happened accidentally in the course of the fight; (2) verses 26-28 present the giving of the name as the blessing, but verse 29 declares that the assailant blessed him; (3) verse 28 has Jacob victorious, but verse 30 records that he escaped with his life.

Because of such tensions, and because Yahweh is not named in the narrative, modern critical scholars have attempted to uncover an ancient mythical story about gods fighting with heroes, a story that could have been adapted for the Jacob narratives. Fraser, Bennett, Gunkel, and Kittel thought that the old story included a river god whose enemy was the sun god which diminished the river with its rays (especially in summer). In other words the Hebrew tradition was "pure fiction" (Schmidt) based on an old myth about a river god named Jabbok who attempted to hinder anyone from crossing. Peniel was his shrine.

The myth was also identified with the deity El, the God of the land of Canaan. McKenzie suggests that the narrative followed an
old Canaanite myth in which the "man" was at one time identified. When Jacob became attached to the story, he argues, the Canaanite deity so named was deliberately obscured,\(^\text{14}\) being replaced by a mysterious being who may or may not be taken as Yahweh. This, McKenzie suggests, was left vague because there was a hesitancy to attribute such deeds to Yahweh. Later the role was transferred to intermediate beings, such as the angel of Esau.

To say that the account gradually developed from some such ancient myth greatly weakens a very important point in the history of Israel and solves none of the tensions that exist. Gevirtz, combining a synchronic study of the text with its geopolitical significance, provides a more constructive approach:

The passage cannot be dismissed merely as a bit of adopted or adapted folk-lore—a contest with a nocturnal demon, river spirit, or regional numen who opposes the river's crossing - to which "secondary" matters of cultic interest have been added, but is rather to be understood as bearing a distinct and distinctive meaning for the people who claim descent from their eponymous ancestor. Where, when, and how Jacob became Israel cannot have been matters of indifference to the Israelite author or to his audience.\(^\text{15}\)

This ancient tradition about Jacob's unusual experience was recorded for Israel because the events of the patriarch's life were understood to anticipate or foreshadow events in Israel's history—receiving the blessing of the land in this case.

**ANALYSIS**

Observations. Several observations give direction to the interpretation of the story. First, the geographical setting is important. The wrestling occurred at the threshold of the land of promise. Jacob had been outside the land ever since his flight from Esau, from whom he wrestled the blessing.

Second, the unifying element of the story is the naming, that is, the making of Jacob into Israel. The new name is not merely added to an old narrative; it is explained by it.

Third, the account is linked to a place name, Peniel. The names Peniel (Gen. 32:30), Mahanaim (Gen. 32:1-2), and Succoth (Gen. 33:17) are each given and etymologized by Jacob in his return to Canaan, and so are important to the narratives.

Fourth, the story is linked to a dietary restriction for the sons of Israel. This taboo was a custom that grew up on the basis of an event, but was not part of the Law. The event in the tradition both created and explained it.
Significance. The theme of the story is the wrestling—no one suggests anything else. However, one cannot study the account in isolation from the context of the Jacob cycle of stories. The connection is immediately strengthened by the plays on the names. At the outset are בֵּית וַעֲבֵד, the man, בֵּית בָּיִם, the place, and בֵּית עֲבֵד the action. These similar sounding words attract the reader's attention. Before, a "Jacob" might cross the "Jabbok" to the land of blessing, he must fight. He attempted once more to trip up his adversary, for at that point he was met by someone wishing to have a private encounter with him, and he was forced into the match. Fokkelman says:

Tripping his fellow-men by the heel (ˋbq) has for Jacob come to its extreme consequence: a wrestling (ˋbq) with a "man" which to Jacob is the most shocking experience of his life, as appears from the fact that thereafter he proceeds through life a man changed of name, and thus of nature, and under the new name he becomes the patriarch of the "Israelites." (This comes out even more strongly in Jacob's own confession in v. 31) [English v. 30].

Ryle notes that the physical disability he suffered serves as a memorial of the spiritual victory and a symbol of the frailty of human strength in the crisis when God meets man face to face. Structure. The event recorded in the narrative gives rise to two names: God renames Jacob "Israel," and Israel names the place "Peniel." It is clear that these names reflect a new status because of the divine blessing. Therefore everything in the record leads up to the giving of the name "Israel"; the giving of the name "Peniel" reflects the significance of the entire encounter as it was understood by Jacob. These names together provide a balanced picture of the significant event.

In a helpful analysis of the structure of this passage, Barthes evaluates the namings as follows:

1. The demand of a name, ________ The response ________ The result: ________
   from God to Jacob of Jacob name change (v. 27) (v. 27) (v. 28)
2. The demand of a name, ________ An indirect ________ The result: ________
   from Jacob of God response decision Name change: ________
   (v. 29) (v. 29) Peniel (v. 30)

This parallel arrangement is instructive: The direct response of Jacob to his assailant leads to his being renamed "Israel"; but the indirect response of the assailant leads Jacob to name the place
"Peniel," for he realized that it was God who fought ("Israel") with him face to face ("Peniel"). One name is given by the Lord to Jacob; the other name is given by Jacob in submission to the Lord.

The passage may be divided into three sections with a prologue and epilogue. Of the three sections, the first (the event, vv 24b-25) prepares for the second (the blessing, vv 26-28), and the third (the evaluation, vv 29-30) reflects the first two.

The Narrative

PROLOGUE (32:22-24a)

These opening verses record the crossing of the Jabbok by Jacob and his family. Because verses 22-32 provide an interlude in the return of Jacob to Canaan, they can be understood as a unit with their parts treated accordingly. The first verse (v. 22) provides a summary statement of the crossing of the river by the entire clan. The crossing is then developed in verses 23-31. Verse 23 introduces the narrative; verse 31 completes it. Between the time Jacob sent his family across and the time he joined them, the wrestling and blessing occurred.

Jacob's being left alone (v. 24a) is not explained. One suggestion is that he intended to spend the night in prayer before meeting Esau. This harmonizes with the allegorical view of the wrestling. More likely, however, Jacob was anticipating an encounter with Esau, and so at night he began crossing the river to establish his ground in the land. Whether he anticipated an encounter in the night or simply was caught alone, is difficult to say. If Jacob remained behind to make sure everything was safely across, then the meeting came as a complete surprise. When he was alone, he was attacked by a man--he was caught in the match.

At any rate the narrative goes to great lengths to isolate Jacob on one side of the river. The question of his plans is irrelevant to the story. The important point is that he was alone.

THE FIGHT (32:24b-25)

Only four sentences in the Hebrew are used for the fight; no details are given, for the fight is but the preamble to the most important part--the dialogue. Yet the fight was real and physical. Dillmann says the limping shows it was a physical occurrence in a material world. The memory of Israel's limping away from the night that gave rise to the dietary restriction attests to the physical reality of the event.
The verb used to describe the wrestling is נֵבַע וָאָבָא, "and he wrestled." It is rare, being found only here in verse 24 and in verse 25. Since the word נֵבַע "dust," this denominative verb perhaps carries the idea of "get dusty" in wrestling. Spurrell suggests that it might possibly be connected to נֵבַע, or that it might be a dialectical variant of this for a wordplay. 23

Martin-Achard concludes that this very rare verb was selected because of assonance with נֵבֵא and נֵבֵא נֵע the sounds b/v and k/q forming strong alliterations at the beginning of the Story. 24 The verb plays on the name of the river as if to say נֵבַע were equal to נֵבַע, meaning a "wrestling, twisting" river. 25 The wordplay employs the name of the river as a perpetual reminder of the most important event that ever happened there.

At this spot "a man" wrestled with Jacob. The word נֵאָס is open to all interpretations. It suggests a mystery but reveals nothing. 26 But this is fitting, for the "man" would refuse to reveal himself directly. The effect of the word choice is that the reader is transported to Jacob's situation. Jacob perceived only that a male antagonist was closing in on him. The reader learns his identity as Jacob did--by his words and actions.

The time of the match is doubly significant. On the one hand it is interesting that the struggle was at night. Darkness concealed the adversary's identity. The fact that he wished to be gone by daylight shows that he planned the night visit. As it turned out, had the assailant come in the daytime, Jacob would have recognized the man's special authority (v 29) and identity (v 30b). If Jacob had perceived whom he was going to have to fight, he would never have started the fight, let alone continued with his peculiar obstinacy. 27

On the other hand the fact that the wrestling lasted till the breaking of day suggests a long, indecisive bout. Indeed, the point is that the assailant could not be victorious until he resorted to something extraordinary.

The turning point of the long bout is clear. After a long, indecisive struggle, the man "touched" Jacob. The "touch" was actually a blow--he dislocated his hip. 28 But the text uses a soft term for it, demonstrating a supernatural activity (cf. Isa. 6:7, he "touched" Isaiah's "lips").

The effect of this blow is clear. The assailant gave himself an unfair advantage over the patriarch, for he was already more than a match for Jacob. The one who might be expected to take advantage of the other was himself crippled by a supernatural blow from his
assailant. In a word, like so many of his own rivals. Jacob now came against something for which he was totally unprepared.

THE BLESSING (32:26-28)

The blow was revealing for Jacob. The true nature of the nameless adversary began to dawn on him as the physical darkness began to lift. He is the One who has power over the affairs of men! He said, "Let me go, for the day breaks!" (author's trans.). But Jacob, having been transformed from a devious fighter into a forthright and resolute one, held on for a blessing. He said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me" (v. 26). Fokkelman characterizes Jacob by stating that "from the most miserable situation he wants to emerge an enriched man." Jacob may not have been aware of all the implications (the narrator certainly was), but he knew the source of blessing.

The blessing for which Jacob pleaded finds expression in a changed name. The assailant first asked the patriarch, "What is your name?" (v. 27)—undoubtedly a rhetorical question. The object was to contrast the old name with the new. When one remembers the significance of names, the point becomes clear: a well-established nature, a fixed pattern of life must be turned back radically! In giving his name, Jacob had to reveal his nature. This name, at least for the narratives, designated its owner as a crafty overreacher. Here the "heel-catcher" was caught and had to identify his true nature before he could be blessed.

"And he said, 'Not Jacob shall your name be called from now on, but Israel, for you have fought with God and man and have prevailed'" (v. 28, author's trans.). This renaming of Jacob is an assertion of the assailant's authority to impart a new life and new status (cf. 2 Kings 23:34; 24:17).

What is the meaning of the name "Israel"? Both Genesis 32:28 and Hosea 12:3 interpret the meaning of the name with a verb "to fight." The meaning of "Israel" would then be defined as "God contends, may God contend, persist." Based on the context in Genesis, the verb should be understood in the sense of fighting.

Coote analyzes Genesis 32:28b and concludes that (a) the syllabic meter is 8:8; (b) the parallel pairs are sry/ylk, 'm/'m, and 'lym/'nsym; (c) the archaic parallelism of the suffixed and prefixed conjugations is present; and (d) the arrangement is chiastic (sry-twkl). The last word is isolated to combine the clause:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ky sryt 'm 'lym} & \quad \text{"for you fought with God}\n\\
\text{w 'm 'nsym wtwk} & \quad \text{and with men, and you prevailed}\n\end{align*}
\]
Therefore the root שָׁבַח is used to explain the name לֵילָה because it sounds the same, is derived from the very story, and is otherwise infrequent. The verb יִבְלֶל is used to explain the outcome of שָׁבַח.

So the narrative signifies that the name לֵילָה means "God fights." It is as if one were to say לֵילָה אֶל; the idea is similar to the epithet תְּבוֹאָה יִדְו. But the meaning of the name involves an interpolation of the elements: "God fights" is explained by "you fought with God." Thus the name is but a motto and a reminder of the seizing of the blessing which would be a pledge of victory and success. Gunkel states that this explanation of the significance of the name was affectionately and proudly employed to show the nature of the nation to be invincible and triumphant; with God's help Israel would fight the entire world and when necessary would fight even God Himself.

Many have been troubled by the difficulties with this explanation. First, if the name means "God fights," then how is it reversed to say Jacob fights with God? The name must be explained on the basis of Semitic name formations. Consequently the form is an imperfect plus a noun that is the subject, as Nestle pointed out long ago. Thus any interpretation with El as object drops out of consideration as the morphological etymology of the name.

Second, the verb שָׁבַח is very rare, making a clear definition difficult. It occurs only in connection with this incident. But the meaning of שָׁבַח may be "contend" and not "fight." Since God has no rivals, such a name is unparalleled and unthinkable.

Third, the versions did not all understand the distinction between שָׁבַח, "to contend," and שָׁבַח, "to rule." The Septuagint has ἐνίσχυσας, Aquila has ἡπξας, Symmachus has ἡπξω, and the Vulgate has fortis fuisti. The problem may be traced to the pointing of the verb לֵילָה in Hosea 12:4, which seems to be from a geminate root לֵילָה (Symmachus, Aquila, and Onkelos). As a result the versions and commentators follow either the idea of "rule" or "contend, oppose" (Josephus).

Various other suggestions for the etymology of "Israel" have been made. A. Haldar suggests that the root is isr/sr, "happy," and that it could possibly be connected to the Canaanite god Asherah. In this view the name change would represent the merging of the two religions.

E. Jacob connects the name with the root יָשָׁר, "just, right." He finds confirmation for this idea in the noun "Jeshurun" (נָּשָׁר, Deut. 32:15; 33:5; 33:26; Isa. 44:2), a poetic designation of Israel,
as well as in the words "Book of Jashar" (מְסַר הַגְּדוֹל), the old collection of national songs (Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18). This could be the book of Israel, the righteous one, the hero of God, according to E. Jacob.\(^{49}\) The major problem with this interpretation is that it involves a change of the sibilant.

Albright takes the name from yasar "to cut, saw," with a developed meaning of "heal": "God heals."\(^{50}\) He finds Arabic wasara, "cut, saw"; Akkadian sararu, "shine" (cf. sarru, "king"); and Ethiopic saraya, "cure, heal," to be the most plausible roots. In connection with the root wasara, he points out that the Arabic root nasara, "revive," could be equated due to morphological contamination of I-Waw and I-Nun roots. Albright argues that the original name was *Yasir-'el from a verbal stem רַשְׁנ, with the developed meaning of "heal" (supported by Ethiopic saraya, and the equation/interchange in Arabic of nasara for wasara). He states, "The fact that the stem yasar is not found in biblical Hebrew is rather in favor of the combination, since its disappearance would explain how the meaning of the name came to be so thoroughly forgotten."\(^{51}\)

Coote, also using the strong letters sr (1-Yod, I-Nun, Geminate, reduplicated, or III weak), chooses the Akkadian root wasaru and traces a semantic development of cutting>deciding>counseling (Arabic 'asara, "counsel" and musir, "counselor").\(^{52}\) He notes that the root htk, "cut," develops to mean "decide or determine." Coote's idea is that htk and sry are parallel in root meaning and development.

Coote finds confirmatory evidence in Isaiah 9:6-7, where there is confluence of sar and sry as in Genesis 32. The word for "government" is the key there. He concludes that the name לֵשָׁר means "El judges" and is from either ysr or sry. It has the meaning of govern by rendering a decree or judgment (Ps. 82:1).

Noth, taking it to be from a third weak root sara, suggests the meaning "to rule, be lord over."\(^{53}\) Through this, God takes action in the world and particularly helps His own. "Israel" then means "God will rule" or "May God rule."

It is certainly possible that one of these Semitic roots is etymologically connected to the name, and that the name meant something like "judge" or "heal" at one time (for the name occurred before this time, as the Eblaite material suggests).\(^{54}\) The popular etymology in Genesis is giving the significance of the name.\(^{55}\) But most of these other suggestions are no more compelling than the popular etymology given in the text of Genesis. The fact that the
word is rare should not lead to the assumption that it means "contend" or "vie with" as a rival. The concept of God's fighting with someone is certainly no more a problem than the passage itself. And the reversal of the emphasis (from "God fights" to "fight with God") in the explanation is because of the nature of popular etymologies, which are satisfied with a wordplay on the sound or meaning of the name to express its significance.

The name serves to evoke the memory of the fight. The name ("God fights") is freely interpreted to say that God is the object of Jacob's struggle. Hearing the name יָהּכִּיָּם one would recall the incident in which Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed. These words were full of hope to the Israelites. Dillmann says that even after the name would tell the Israelites that when Jacob contended successfully with God, he won the battle with man. Thus the name "God fights" and the popular explanation "you prevailed" obtain a significance for future struggles.

THE RESPONSE (32:29-30)

Jacob afterward attempted to discover his adversary's name. The "man" had acted with full powers and spoken with authority. He had gotten to the bottom of Jacob's identity; He could not be mortal. Thus Jacob sought to discover His name. But the answer was cautious: "Why do you ask my name?" (author's trans.).

On the one hand it is as if He was saying to Jacob, "Think, and you will know the answer!" But on the other hand He was unwilling to release His name for Jacob to control. The divine name cannot be had on demand nor taken in vain, for that would expose it to the possibility of magical manipulation.

Jacob had to be content with a visitation from a "man" whom he realized was divine. Jacob might have recalled that Abram was visited by "men" (Gen. 18) with such powers. Lot also received those men in the night, and was saved alive when the sun arose (Gen. 19). Apparently this was the manner of manifestation of the Lord in Genesis.

Jacob named the place "Peniel" because he had seen God face to face and had been delivered. This is the second part of the basic structure. First, God demanded and changed his name. Here, Jacob was not given the divine name, but named the place to commemorate the event. He had power over that realm, but could not overreach it. The play on the name is clear: Having seen God "face to face" he named the place Peniel, "face of God."
The impact of the encounter was shocking for Jacob. Seeing God was something no man survived (Gen. 48:16; Exod. 19:21; 24:10; Judg. 6:11, 22; Judg. 13). But this appearance of the "man" guaranteed deliverance for the patriarch. God had come as close to Jacob as was imaginable. Jacob exclaimed, "I have seen God face to face and I have been delivered" (Gen. 32:30, author's trans.). The idea is not "and yet" I have been delivered, but rather "and my life has been delivered" (יָדָה). His prayer for deliverance (vv. 9-12) was answered by God in this face-to-face encounter and blessing. Meeting God "face to face" meant that he could now look Esau directly in the eye.

EPILOGUE (32:31-32)

Verse 31 provides the conclusion for the narrative. As the sun rose, Jacob crossed over Peniel with a limp. Ewald says that he limped on his thigh "as if the crookedness, which had previously adhered to the moral nature of the wily Jacob, had now passed over into an external physical attribute only." The final verse of the story is an editorial note that explains a dietary restriction that developed on account of this event. The wounding of the thigh of Jacob caused the "children of Israel" not to eat of the sciatic nerve "until this day." This law does not form part of the Sinaitic Code, and so according to some scholars may have been a later custom in Israel. This is argued from the fact that the reference is made to Israelites rather than the "sons of Jacob," suggesting that the custom is post-Sinaitic.

The expression "until this day" is usually taken as a sure sign of an etiological note. Childs concludes that in the majority of the cases it is the expression of a personal testimony added to and confirming a received tradition, a commentary on existing customs. He concludes that this cultic practice was introduced secondarily into the narrative. It provided a causal relation for the customary taboo.

Summary

THE NATURE OF JACOB

The special significance of Jacob's becoming Israel is the purification of character. Peniel marks the triumph of the higher over the lower elements of his life; but if it is a triumph for the higher elements, it is a defeat for the lower. The outcome of the match is a paradox. The victor ("you ... have prevailed," Gen.
32:28) wept (Hos. 12:4) and pleaded for a blessing: once blessed he emerged, limping on a dislocated hip. How may this be a victory and a blessing?

The defeat of Jacob. Because Jacob was guilty, he feared his brother and found God an adversary. Jacob prepared to meet Esau, whom he had deceived, but the patriarch had to meet God first. God broke Jacob's strength before blessing him with the promise of real strength (the emphasis is on God's activity).

When God touched the strongest sinew of Jacob, the wrestler, it shriveled, and with it Jacob's persistent self-confidence. His carnal weapons were lamed and useless— they failed him in his contest with God. He had always been sure of the result only when he helped himself, but his trust in the naked force of his own weapons was now without value.

The victory of Jacob. What he had surmised for the past 20 years now dawned on him— he was in the hands of One against whom it is useless to struggle. One wrestles on only when he thinks his opponent can be beaten. With the crippling touch, Jacob's struggle took a new direction. With the same scrappy persistence he clung to his Opponent for a blessing. His goal was now different. Now crippled in his natural strength he became bold in faith.

Thus it became a show of significant courage. Jacob won a blessing that entailed changing his name. It must be stressed that he was not wrestling with a river demon or Esau or his alter ego, but with One who was able to bless him.

He emerged from the encounter an altered man. After winning God's blessing legitimately, the danger with Esau vanished. He had been delivered.

THE PROMISES TO JACOB

What, then, is the significance of this narrative within the structure of the patriarchal history? In the encounter the emphasis on promise and fulfillment seems threatened. At Bethel a promise was given: at the Jabbok fulfillment seemed to be barred as God opposed Jacob's entrance into the land. Was there a change of attitude with Yahweh who promised the land? Or was this simply a test?

In a similar but different story, Moses was met by God because he had not complied with God's will (Exod. 4:24). With Jacob, however, the wrestling encounter and name changes took on a greater significance because he was at the frontier of the land promised to the seed of Abraham. God, the real Proprietor of the
land, opposed his entering as Jacob. If it were only a matter of mere strength, then He let Jacob know he would never enter the land.\(^66\)

The narrative, then, supplies a moral judgment on the crafty Jacob who was almost destroyed in spite of the promise. Judging from Jacob's clinging for a blessing, the patriarch made the same judgment on himself.

**THE DESCENDANTS OF JACOB**

On the surface the story seems to be a glorification of the physical strength and bold spirit of the ancestor of the Israelites.\(^67\) However, like so much of the patriarchal history, it is transparent as a type of what Israel, the nation, experienced from time to time with God.\(^68\) The story of Israel the man serves as an acted parable of the life of the nation, in which the nation's entire history with God is presented, almost prophetically, as a struggle until the breaking of day.\(^69\) The patriarch portrays the real spirit of the nation, engaging in the persistent struggle with God until they emerge strong in His blessing. Consequently the nation is referred to as Jacob or Israel, depending on which characteristics predominate.

The point of the story for the nation of Israel entering the land of promise is clear: Israel's victory will come not by the usual ways nations gain power, but by the power of the divine blessing. And later in her history Israel would be reminded that the restoration to the land would not be by might, nor by strength, but by the Spirit of the Lord God who fights for His people (Zech. 4:6). The blessings of God come by His gracious, powerful provisions, not by mere physical strength or craftiness. In fact there are times when God must cripple the natural strength of His servants so that they may be bold in faith.

**NOTES**

1 Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1917), p. 361. Gunkel understands these features to be characteristic of a certain type of religious story in which the hero fights a god (e.g., Hercules). His observation of the antiquity of the story must be seen in this connection.
2 Nathaniel Schmidt points out that the passage was intended to answer certain questions about customs and traditions: yet on a closer reading many other questions surface ("The Numen of Penuel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 45 [1926]:265).
4 Josephus *Antiquities* 1. 331.
7 Philo, *De mutatione nominum* 87.
8 Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1. 7. 57.
10 *Midrash Genesis* 77. 3.
12 On the other hand such tensions can be plausibly harmonized: verse 25b may be the natural effect of verse 25a, the giving of the name is the token of the blessing, and the victory involves the crippling of human devices.
15 S. Gevirtz, "Of Patriarchs and Puns: Joseph at the Fountain, Jacob at the Ford." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975):50. While Gevirtz's reaction to these suggestions is helpful, his own interpretation is rather fanciful, as will be mentioned later.
19 Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis*, p. 211.
20 The River Jabbok is the *Wadi ez-Zerka*. "the blue," that is, a clear mountain stream. It is on the frontier of the land.
21 Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis*, p. 211.
25 Gunkel says, "Ye'abeq-das Wort nur bier and 26; Anspielusig and wisprunglich wol Erklärungs versuch des Namens Yabboq" (*Genesis*, p. 326).
26 Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis*, p. 213.
28 The verb *yqay* implies a separation or dislocation. It is used figuratively in Jeremiah 6:8 and Ezekiel 23:18. In the Hiphil it represents some form of execution, but its precise form is uncertain. The solemn execution of the seven men in 2 Samuel 21:6 may be a hanging or impaling.
30 Von Rad suggests that this is a basic feature of human nature. In desperation Jacob clung to the divine for help (*Genesis*, p. 321).
31 It may be observed that the praying began after the fight was over. So the fighting cannot signify intense praying.
33 The name Jacob has as its probable meaning "May he protect" or in its fullest form. Jacob-el, "may God protect" (Martin Noth, *Die israelitischen Personen-namen im Rah men dergemeinsierten Na mengebung* [Stuttgart: Verlag von W Kohlhamer, 1928], pp. 177-78; also see W F Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* [Garden City. NY: Doubleday & Co., 1957], p. 237, n. 51). The protection is that of a rearguard, one who follows behind the group. In the naming of the infant (Gen. 25), the mother selected a name that would instantly recall how the
younger child grasped the heel of his brother (בָּאָדָם) - after all, the mother had received the oracle about the twins and so would note such unusual developments. But the parents would in no wise name a child "overreacher" or "deceitful." But in his lifetime Jacob "tripped" his brother twice, prompting Esau to reinterpret his name: "Is he not rightly called Jacob? He has deceived me these two times" (Gen. 27:36, author's trans.). After those incidents the significance of the name became that of a deceiver, one who dogged the heels of another to trip him and take unfair advantage. Jeremiah later would say, "Every brother is a'Jacob... (Jer. 9:4, author's trans.).

39 Robertson Smith writes: "The very name of Israel is martial, and means 'God (El) fighteth,' and Jehovah in the Old Testament is Iahwe cebaath, the Jehovah of the armies of Israel. It was on the battlefield that Jehovah's presence was most clearly realized..." (The Prophets of Israel [Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 18821, p. 36).
41 Gunkel writes, "Es ist ein grossartiger und sicherlich uralter Gedanke Israels, es sei im Stande, nicht nur die ganze Welt mit Gottes Hulfe, sondern auch, wo notig Gott selber zu bekampfen and zu uberwinden" (Genesis, p. 328). Gunkel restated this in the 1917 edition: "denn wen selbst die Gottheit nicht bezwingen konnte, den wird kein Feind bawaltigen!"
42 Martin Noth, Die israelitischen Personennamen, p. 208.
43 W F Albright, "The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah' with an Excursus on the Etymology of Todah and Torah," Journal of Biblical Literature 46 (1927):159. Nestle's discussion was in Die israelitischen Eigennamen. There are exceptions, of course, such as הָאָדָם in 2 Chronicles 29:12.
44 Albright, "The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah.'"
45 The pointing of הָאָדָם is in itself unexpected; a shewa would be expected under the ת. Albright suggests a secondary development under the influence of the Greek tradition (Albright follows Max Margolis, "The Pronunciation of the Ḥēḏ according to New Hexaplaric Material," The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature [1909]:66). When the shewa is followed by a laryngeal we have an a vowel in Greek (Ὀρεστήλα). So the shewa had an a coloring before the weak laryngeal in the pre-Masoretic age. The Masoretes, under the influence of Aramaic reduced a short a in the open syllable to shewa, except in two well-known names, הָאָדָם and הָאָדָם where it was too well-established to be eliminated (Albright, "The Names of 'Israel' and 'Judah,'" p. 161).
48 "El est droit ou juste" (Edmond Jacob, Theologie de L'Ancient Testament [Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestle Editeurs, 19551, p. 155 [p. 203 in the English translation]). Jacob says that the explanation given in Genesis is philologically untenable.
49 Ibid., p. 50.
50 Albright, "The Names 'Israel' and 'Judah." " p. 166.
51 Ibid., p. 168. Of course the fact that a root הָלַשְׁנָ, meaning "fight." is rare was taken as an objection to that meaning. Argument based on rarity loses its force.
52 Coote, "The Meaning of the Name Israel," p. 139.
53 Noth, Die israelitischen Personennamen, pp. 191. 208.
55 Popular etymologies are satisfied with a loose connection between the words. Rarely are they precise etymologies such as with the explanation of Joseph in Genesis 30:23-24 (םְפָרֵי, "may he add"). Most often they express a wish or sentiment that is loosely connected by a wordplay For example, Seth is explained with מָשֶׁה, "he appointed": Simeon with מָשָׁמַע, "he heard": Ephraim with נָכָרִים, "he made me fruitful": Levi with מְלַיִי, "he will be attached": Judah with מֶלֶק, "I will praise." On occasion the popular etymology employs a completely different root. For example, Jabez (גְּבָאֵה) is explained with the word: צְבָא and Reuben is explained with נָפָל, "he has looked on my affliction." Such popular etymologies are more interested in the significance of the name than in the technical etymology
56 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 322.
57 Dillmann, Genesis, 2: 279.
58 Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, p. 218.
60 Here the word is spelled לְמָלָא, but later מֵנוֹאָל (LXX has Λειδος θεου). The l and the * that serve as binding vowels are probably old case endings (see E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, eds., Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. 2d ed. [Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1910], p. 254, para. 90a, and Spurrell, Notes on the Text of the Book of Genesis, p. 284).
Skinner suggests that it is not improbable that the place is named for its resemblance to a face (Genesis, p. 410; Strabo mentions such a Phoenician promontory θεοφίλος πρόσωπων [16. 2. 15-16]). The story would then be an etiological narrative designed to explain such a phenomenon. More likely the name was used to fit the experience rather than the experience to fit the name.
61 Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, p. 219.
64 Ibid., p. 288.
66 Dillmann, Genesis 2:280.
67 The figure of Jacob is exalted in Isaiah 41:8; 44:1, 2, 21: 48:20: and 49:3. Compare, however, the juxtaposition of Jacob and Israel in 1 Kings 18:3 1.
68 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 325.
69 But the direction Gevirtz takes on this is surely extreme. He argues that the sinew of the hip (הָלַשְׁנָ דָג) is an allusion to Gad and Manasseh, who had the Jabbok as their common border. The lesson of the allusion was then that the emergence of Israel depended on the confederation of Gad and Manasseh.
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Studies in the Life of Jacob
Part 1:

**Jacob's Vision:**
The Founding of Bethel

Allen P. Ross

**Introduction**

The clear revelation of God's gracious dealings with man can transform a worldly individual into a worshiper. It is a drama that has been repeated again and again throughout the history of the faith. Perhaps no story in Scripture illustrates this so vividly as Jacob's dream at Bethel, recorded in Genesis 28:10-22. Before this experience Jacob was a fugitive from the results of his sin, a troubled son in search of his place in life, a shrewd shepherd setting out to find a wife. But after this encounter with God he was a partner with Him as a recipient of God's covenant promises and a true worshiper. The transformation is due to God's intrusion into the course of his life.

THE NARRATIVE¹

The story unfolds quickly and dramatically. Being persona non grata in Canaan after deceiving Isaac and receiving the blessing, Jacob went on his way to Haran until things settled down. At sundown he stopped at a "place" and took "one of the stones of the place" to prepare for the night. But in a dream that night God appeared to him from the top of an angel-filled stairway and confirmed that the blessing was indeed his. When Jacob awoke he was afraid because he realized that the Lord was in that place; at dawn he set up the stone as a memorial, named the place Bethel, "the House of God," and vowed to worship there when he returned to his father's house in peace.
THE NARRATIVE'S LITERARY FEATURES

The literary devices in the passage are designed to show that the vision inspired the manner of Jacob's worship and gave new meaning to the place of his vision. The repetition of key terms throughout the narrative ties the whole account together and explains the significance of Jacob's response. In his dream Jacob saw a stairway standing (מֵעַבָּד) on the earth, and the Lord standing (בְּאֵל) above or by it. This repetition suggests that the stairway functioned to point to the Lord. Then in view of what he saw, Jacob took the stone he had used and set it up as a "pillar" (מֵעַבָּד), this word recalling the previous two. By setting up the stone in this way Jacob apparently wanted to establish forever that he had seen the Lord standing over the stairway. The wordplays then focus the reader's attention on Jacob's vision of the Lord -- the standing stairway pointing to it and the standing stone being a reminder of it.

The repetition of the word מֵעַבָּד also confirms this connection between the two parts. Jacob had seen the stairway with its top (מֵעַבָּד) in the heavens, and so he anointed the top (מֵעַבָּד) of the stone that he set up in commemoration, a stone he had used for the place of his head (יִתְנְשֶׁהָפִּי). Moreover, the key words in verses 11-12, the last part of the vision, are reversed in their order in the first part of the response. Jacob saw the stairway reaching to heaven, on it the angels of God, and above it the Lord. That the central focus is on the Lord is clear from the inversion; what came last in the vision is the first thing Jacob was concerned with. He exclaimed, "The Lord is in this place.... This is the house of God; this is the gate of heaven!" (vv 16-17).

The story deliberately emphasized the place's insignificance, which leads up to its naming in verse 19. The word "place" (מָקוֹם) is used six times in the story. Verse 11 reports that Jacob came upon a place to spend the night, took one of the stones from the place, and lay down in that place. But in the second half of the narrative, after the theophany, Jacob said, "Surely the Lord is in this place," and "How terrifying is this place!" Then "he named that place Bethel," though it was formerly called Luz (v. 19). It was not an anonymous place after all; there was a city nearby called Luz. But for the sake of this story it was just a "place" until it became Bethel.

The literary features, then, strengthen the development of the motifs of the narrative to show how a place became a shrine, a
stone became an altar, and a fugitive became a pilgrim--God in His grace revealed Himself to Jacob in that place.

THE FUNCTION OF THE NARRATIVE

The two most significant events in the life of Jacob were nocturnal theophanies. The first was this dream at Bethel when he was fleeing from the land of Canaan, which ironically was his by virtue of the blessing. The other was his fight at Peniel when he was attempting to return to the land. Each divine encounter was a life-changing event.

But the location of these episodes in the Jacob stories is strategic. The Bethel story forms the transition from the Jacob-Esau cycle to the Jacob-Laban cycle, and the Peniel story forms the connection back to the Esau story. In each of the encounters with God there is instilled in the patriarch great expectation for the uncertain future. In this incident at Bethel Jacob's vow expresses his anticipation for the future. God would now be with him and help him, even though he might be slow to realize it. The promise of God's presence and protection would bring continued encouragement during the 20 years with Laban.

The parallels between this story and the beginning of Genesis 32 are striking, showing that the story of Jacob's sojourn in Aram is deliberately bracketed with supernatural visions. In this story Jacob saw the angels of God (מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים) on the stairway, but in 32:1 the angels of God (מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים) met him. These are the only two places in the Book of Genesis where reference is made to the "angels of God." In addition, in both passages (28:11; 32:1) the construction of the verb "encountered, met" is the same, a preterite form of בָּא and the object. In 28:16-17 it is used four times, the last two being in the statement, "This is the House of God, this is the gate of heaven"; and in 32:2 it reappears in the clause "this is the camp of God." Also in both accounts Jacob names the spot, using the same formula for each: "and he named that place ... (וַיָּקָם אֶת-סְמֻיָּה מִפֶּסַקְוָתָם הָוָה). "And finally, "going" and "the way" (וָאֹלַלְךָ אֶת-שָׁם הַפֶּסַקְוָתָםָה and וָאָלַלְךָ) in 28:20 are reflected in 32:2.

The stories about Jacob's encounters with God or His angels also form an interesting contrast with the other Jacob stories. Jacob is usually working against another individual in the narratives, first Esau in the Jacob-Esau cycle of chapters 25-27, and then Laban in the Jacob-Laban cycle of chapters 29-31, and then Esau again in 33. The account in chapter 34 of the defile-
ment of Dinah also shows a crisis, though Simeon and Levi figure more prominently in that narrative. But in the encounter passages (28:10-22 at Bethel, 32:2-3 at Mahanaim, 32:23-33 at Peniel, and 35:1-7, 14-15 at Bethel again, the latter forming a conscious liturgical conclusion to the whole complex) Jacob alone is mentioned. Neither Esau nor Laban were with him. In fact Esau never experienced any divine appearance, and Laban received only a warning dream. But when Jacob had these appearances he participated in liturgical acts. The narratives, then, heighten what the Bethel story declares, namely, that Jacob's life functioned on two levels, his conflicts with individuals and his encounters with God. The encounters assured Jacob that he would prevail in the conflicts.

This liturgical motif forms the climax in the Bethel story. In fact Westermann calls the whole story a sanctuary foundation narrative. It explains how Bethel came to be such an important center for the worship of the Lord. Because God actually met the patriarch on this spot, it was holy ground. Here then was a place where worship was appropriate.

Exegesis

THE SETTING

The story begins with Jacob's departure from Beersheba for Haran. The preceding narrative in Genesis explains the reason for this trip--Esau was threatening to kill him for stealing the blessing. So it was, as Kidner says, that Jacob was thrust from the nest he was feathering.

To be sure, Jacob had obtained the blessing by deception at first, but then had it confirmed by the shaken Isaac (28:1-4) who, realizing what had happened, was powerless to change it (27:37). But were the promises actually his? If he truly was the heir, why must he flee from the land? Would God's blessing be his as it had been Abraham's and Isaac's before him? Nothing less than a sure word from God would ease his doubts and give him confidence for the future.

The narrative unfolds in a disarmingly casual manner. Jacob came upon a place where he would stay for the night, for the sun had set. The only detail that is mentioned is that he took "one of the stones" at random to lay by his head while he slept. But this casual finding of an anonymous place and taking one of the stones in the darkness of night begins to build suspense.
THE VISION

With an abrupt change of style that brings the vision into the present experience, the narrative introduces the dream. Up to this point the narrative sequence has employed preterites ([אֶלְעַיָּה, גֶּזַּע, נַעֲשָׁה, דְּנָשָׁה, נַעֲשָׁה, אֶלְעַיָּה,]), but this is now broken off abruptly by means of the repetition of [הֶה] followed by participles. Jacob was surprised by what he dreamed, and the reader is vividly made aware of this. Fokkelman points out that the particle [הֶה] functions with a deictic force; it is pre- or para-lingual. It goes with a lifted arm, an open mouth: "--there, a ladder! oh, angels! and look, the Lord Himself!"

The arrangement of the clauses also narrows the focus to the central point of the vision, the Lord. Each clause in Hebrew is shorter than the preceding; the first has seven words, the second six, and the third four:

There was a stairway standing on the earth with its top reaching the heavens, and there were angels of God ascending and descending on it, and there was the Lord standing over it.

Attention is focused first on the setting, then narrowed to the participants, and then to the Lord.

The first thing noticed is the stairway. מַרְצִיר, translated "ladder" or "stairway," is a hapax legomenon, a word or form occurring only once in the biblical corpus. It has been traditionally connected to the root [לָלַי], "to heap up, cast up." Related nouns are [לָלָה], "paved way" (but not of a street in a city), and [לָלָה], "a bank, siege-ramp" (2 Sam. 20:15). These suggested etymological connections, however, do not clarify the meaning.

The Greek text translated מַרְצִיר with κλίμαξ, which can be translated "ladder" or "staircase." So too is the case with the Latin scala. The same uncertainty of meaning prevails with the versions.

Several specific interpretations have been offered for מַרְצִיר, but the one that has the most to commend it is the view that connects the מַרְצִיר with Mesopotamian temple towers. The Akkadian word simmittu, cognate to מַרְצִיר, provides the link. It is used to describe the "stairway of heaven" extending between heaven and the netherworld with messengers ascending and descending on it. The comparison is certainly an attractive one. Another possible connection is with the celestial ladder.
found in the Pyramid Texts of Egypt. But this may be too different. Pyramid text 267 shows that the function of the stairway was to lead the deceased (king) to heaven.

The connection to Akkadian simniltu with the Mesopotamian background is the most probable view. In the myth of "Nergel and Ereshkigal" communication between the netherworld and heaven takes place via the long stairway of heaven that leads to the gate of Anu, Enlil, and Ea. The idea of a ziggurat with its long staircase to the temple top would be behind the idea. Nothing in Genesis 28, however, describes a ziggurat. The most that can be said is that a word used in ziggurat settings is cognate to the word used here, a word that fits the way of communication between heaven and earth. So Hebrew סֹלֶל is appropriate to the point of the story--here was a place that heaven and earth touch, where there is access to God.

The second feature of the vision is the angelic hosts "ascending and descending" on the stairway, suggesting their presence on earth along with their access to heaven. Driver writes, "The vision is a symbolic expression of the intercourse which, though invisible to the natural eye, is nevertheless ever taking place between heaven and earth."

Nothing is said here about the function of the angels; likewise no hint can be found in the corresponding episode at Mahanaim which simply reports that the angels "met him." Other references to angels in Genesis are more helpful. Of course the cherubim in 3:24 guard the way to the tree of life. Then in chapter 18 three visitors came to Abraham, and in chapter 19 two went on to meet with Lot in Sodom. In 18:2 they are simply called "three men." That this may be a manifestation of the Lord is suggested by the context and reinforced by the use of לֵב שָׁמֶש in 18:2 which corresponds to 28:13. But in 19:1 the two who went to Sodom are called יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד. Their task was to rescue Lot before the judgment on the city.

The expression יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד, "the angel of the Lord," is used interchangeably with "the Lord" in 22:11, 15. In 48:16 Jacob apparently was referring to the Lord when he said, "The angel (יהוה) who protects me from all evil bless the lads...."

The activities in these passages are guarding, communicating, rescuing, and protecting. In this vision, then, the angels of God communicated God's protection for Jacob, the recipient of the promises.
The third and central feature of the vision, however, was the Lord who was standing over the stairway. Later, in Genesis 48, Jacob would identify the Lord as God Almighty (יְהֹוָה אֹרֶךְ), explaining that God had given him the blessing at Bethel.

THE PROMISE

The word of the Lord in this vision took the form of a covenantal communication and extended the patriarchal promises to Jacob. The message begins with the identification of the Lord as the covenant God: "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac." This pattern of self-revelation was used in Genesis 15:7 for Abraham; it also appears in Exodus at the beginning of the covenant (Exod. 20:1) and throughout the Law when God stressed His covenant relationship to His people. The identification of Abraham as the "father" of Jacob shows the latter's continuity with the covenant.

The first part of the revelation guaranteed that Jacob would receive the blessings at first promised to Abraham. The wording of the promises is close to that in Genesis 13:14-16 and 22:17-18. Prominence is attached to the promise of the land, for it is mentioned before the seed promise and stressed by the word order: "The land, upon which you are lying, to you I will give it and to your seed." The mention of the seed here would have been encouraging to Jacob who was going to find a wife, and is further elaborated on by the statement that the seed would "break out" and settle in every direction in this Promised Land (cf. 13:12-18). Finally, the promise that all the families of the earth would be blessed in Jacob shows that the Abrahamic blessing had indeed been carried forward to Jacob (cf. 12:3).

These promises given to Jacob so dramatically would have provided him with confidence. Though he had been deceitful in gaining the blessing, God in His grace gave it to him; and even though he was fleeing from his land, God promised to give him the land.

The second part of the revelation guaranteed protection for Jacob in the sojourn. It begins with the promise of God's presence: "Indeed, I will be with you" (אֲנִי אֲלֵךְ). The promise of the divine presence carried God's chosen people through many times of danger and difficulty. It assured them that they did not have to accomplish His plan by themselves. Moses, for example, drew great comfort from this in his early career. When he was afraid to go to deliver the people God said, "Surely I will be with
you (כְּרִי אֲדוֹתִי אֵתִי)." The writer of Psalm 46 also realized the benefits of God's presence: "The Lord of hosts is with us (ךְּפִי), the God of Jacob is our refuge" [Ps. 46:7, 11]. This passage also brings to mind Isaiah's oracle that promises "God is with us (לַאָרֵי)" (7:14).

That God's presence would guarantee safety is verified by the next verb, "and I will keep you." His presence, then, meant that God would be Jacob's "Keeper," so that no harm would come to him wherever he should go.24 Joshua also reminded the people how God had protected them on their sojourn (Josh. 24:17). This is a theme that Psalm 121 develops for the pilgrim on his way to Jerusalem, where he would hear the high priestly blessing announce the same divine intent: "The Lord bless you and keep you" (Num. 6:24). The promise of divine protection does not exclude conflict and tension, but it does guarantee the outcome for the good of the covenant and its recipient.

The promise concludes with the statement that God will restore Jacob to the land to receive the promises. The statement "I will not forsake you until I shall have done" need not imply that once God fulfills the blessing He will abandon Jacob; rather, it provides assurance that the promises just made will be fulfilled. God's protective presence will work toward the fulfillment of the promise.

THE REALIZATION

When Jacob awakened he was overwhelmed with the fact that the Lord was "in this place" (v 16). He had never imagined that this rather ordinary place could be a holy place. Jacob here realized what God had promised--His presence was with him. Jacob's attitude of fear was appropriate for such a meeting with the Lord. The term "fear" is used in the Bible to describe a mixture of terror and adoration, a worshipful fear (cf. Exod. 19:16). People may revere the Lord (the positive, worshipful, aspect of the word), but when they comprehend more fully His sovereign majesty, they shrink back in fear. All worshipful acts must begin with and be characterized by reverential fear at the presence of the Lord (Exod. 3:6; 19; Ps. 2:11). Of Jacob, Bush says, "His feelings upon awakening were those of grateful wonder mingled with emotions of reverential awe, bordering close upon dread."25

Jacob realized that this place was holy: "How frightening is this place! This is none other than the House of God, and this is
the gate of heaven." Here the motif of "house" is first introduced (בֵית אֱלֹהִים, house of God). By using this term Jacob designated the place as a shrine. No literal house was there, nor an actual gate. But it would now be known as a place where people could find access to God, where God could be worshiped. He had "seen" God in the heavens, and so God's "house" on earth was man's gate to the heavens.

THE WORSHIP

Devotion. Early in the morning Jacob arose and stood the stone up as a pillar at which he could express his submission through worship. The preparation for worship by setting up a pillar raises questions about the custom. Graesser shows how standing stones in the ancient world would serve as markers, arresting the attention of the onlooker because they were not in their natural position. Such a standing stone had to have been put that way; it would mark a grave (Rachel's pillar in Gen. 35:20), form a boundary (the treaty with Laban in Gen. 31:45), note some important event (Samuel's Ebenezer in 1 Sam. 7:12), or, as here, mark out a sacred area where God could be "found," where prayer could reach Him. This pillar would be a commemoration of the vision, recalling the stairway to heaven.

Jacob's offering took the form of oil poured on top of the stone, perhaps pointing to the Lord at the top of the stairway. Pouring the oil before the Lord was a gift to God, for it conveyed much the same attitude as making a sacrifice. It was a symbolic ritual act by which Jacob demonstrated his devotion to the Lord and consecrated the spot as holy to Him. Later, oil was used in worship to sanctify the holy places and holy things (Lev. 8:10-11). So this duly consecrated altar served to commemorate the appearance, express the patriarch's devotion, and guarantee the seriousness of the oath of the worshiper (cf. Gen. 12:8; 13:18; 26:25).

Commemoration. According to the story Jacob named the place "Bethel" because God had come near to him there. This naming actually transformed the place from being merely a Canaanite town called Luz into God's "house" for Jacob and his descendants to use for worship.

Modern scholarship suggests that this spot was an original Canaanite shrine or sanctuary city, founded before the time of Abram and dedicated to the god El. Von Rad says that Bethel must have been known as a cult center before the time of Israel
because a god named Bethel was worshiped there. It is true that the name "Bethel" does not always seem to be a place name but at times is a divine name, perhaps developing metonymically through association with a shrine. The evidence for this deity does not, however, include Phoenician or Ugaritic literature, and so the presentation of such a deity for the second millennium B.C. in Canaan cannot be convincingly defended. As far as the Hebrew account is concerned, the name of Bethel derives its significance from the fact that the Lord appeared to Jacob there. The motivation for the name came in the speech of verse 17 which is a stylized reaction to the theophany (cf. Judg. 6:22; 13:22; Gen. 16:13b; Exod. 20:18; Deut. 5:24).

This part of the passage develops the theme of "house." The key is the patriarch's exclamation, "This is the House of God." He then preserved the vision by naming the place "House of God." But the word הָיוּ is repeated in verses 21a, b, and 22a. It is as if this fugitive was saying that when he returned to settle in the land God would settle with him. God would go with him and bring him back to his father's "house" in peace. When he returned, there would be a "house" for God in the Promised Land.

_Dedication._ Jacob's promise to worship God at Bethel was solemnized by oath. Vows were not made to induce God to do something He was not willing to do. They were made to bind the worshiper to the performance of some acknowledged duty. Jacob made his vow on the basis of what God had guaranteed to do. So he was taking God at His word and binding himself to reciprocate with his own dedication.

The oath then must be divided between a protasis and an apodosis--"if... then." It is not easy to determine just where to make this division. The protasis should form the foundation for his promise and should include what God had promised to do. The apodosis should record what Jacob wanted to do for God. So the most appropriate place to start the apodosis may be in verse 22. The vow would then read:

If the Lord God is with me.
and keeps me in this way in which I am going,
and gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear,
so that I return in peace to the house of my father,
and the Lord becomes my God.
then this stone which I set up as a pillar
will be the house of God,
and all which you give me a tenth I will give to you (author's trans.).
God had promised to be with him, keep him, bless him, return him in peace, in short, be his God; consequently, Jacob promised that the spot would be a place of worship and that he would tithe.

The vow to tithe is the only part of Jacob's promise that is a real action. Moreover, the structure of the speech changes to the second person in a personal address to God directly. His gratitude and submission to God would be expressed through the paying of a tithe.

So Jacob did more than consecrate Bethel as a place of worship for the nation of Israel. He himself was moved to worship there, and his acts formed a pattern for later worshipers to follow in the offering of their devotion and their substance to God.

**Conclusion**

This brief account tells how God deals graciously with His covenant people. It tells how God suddenly and unexpectedly broke into the life of the deceiver who was fleeing for his life, and assured him of the covenantal promises and His protective presence. But the point of the narrative is the effect on Jacob's life--he worshiped and prepared for the worship of his descendants at this "House of God."

The didactic level of the story for Israel would be clear. Jacob, who represents Israel in the story, who was anything but obedient at the outset, would spend a number of years outside the land (cf. Gen. 15:13-16). During that time God would protect and bless him (cf. Exod. 1:7, 12, 20) and ultimately return him to his inheritance. Such covenantal blessings should inspire worshipful devotion from God's people (cf. Exod. 5:1; 14:29-15:21; Josh. 4:19-24; 8:30-31).

The Christian experience is similar. The effectual revelation of God's protective presence and promised blessings for Christians will inspire devout and faithful worship. Those who fully realize God's gracious provision, those whom the Word of God has powerfully impressed, will respond with consecration and commitment. Where there is no reverential fear, no commitment or no devotion, there is probably very little apprehension of what the spiritual life is all about. Like the revelation to Jacob, the written revelation of God makes the believer aware of the Lord's presence and prompts him to a higher level of living.
Notes

1 The critical analysis of this passage is rather complex. Long says that J is partially preserved in verses 10, 13, 15, 16, and 19, but that it is now overlaid and dominated by E in verses 11, 12, 17, 18, and 20-22 (Burke O. Long, The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament [Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 19681, p. 60). Von Rad's combination is different. He argues that verses 16 and 17 are parallel, as are 19a and 22a, and he then takes verses 13-16 and 19 as J, and verses 10-12, and 17-22 (except 19) as E (Gerhard von Rad, Genesis [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 19611, p. 278). According to von Rad only J contains the etymological formula on the name. Even if a case could be made convincingly for these sources, and if there was agreement on the divisions, one would still be left with the difficulties and tensions in the final, fixed form of the text. All the ideas in the story were apparently understood as a unified tradition of the founding of Bethel. Moreover, the literary design of the account bolsters its unity. The problem of the parallel passage in Genesis 35 could then also be understood as a stylistic device of confirmation and recapitulation.

2 The author is indebted to Fokkelman's discussion of the basic ideas about the literary features of this passage (J. P Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis [Assen, Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 19751, pp. 65-81).


4 C. Houtman, "Jacob at Mahanaim: Some Remarks on Genesis 32:2-3," Vetus Testamentum 28 (1978):39. See also Fokkelman, Narrative Art, p. 198. Fishbane adds that יָמָה is a theme word in chapter 32, referring to both the angels of God and the messengers sent to Esau (Text and Texture, p. 54).


8 The effect of this gracious revelation in Genesis 28 appears to have had just such an effect. In 29:1 the text says "And Jacob picked up his feet and went." In other words, with this assurance from God Jacob had a new gait in his steps.

9 The verb יָמָה adds to the note of casualness. It means "to encounter, meet." Fokkelman translates it "he struck upon" a place (Narrative Art, p. 48).

10 It is unlikely that a stone large enough to be a pillar should be a pillow. The word signifies what is at the head. It is used in 1 Samuel 26:7 in the same way: Saul lay sleeping within the trench, with his spear stuck in the ground "at his head."

11 Ibid., pp. 51-52. The KJV of course uses "behold" in all three places, as does the NASB. The Niv has not reflected the impact of יָמָה by translating the verses, "He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the Lord...."

12 It is interesting to note that the next chapter uses יָמָה in a similar way. It first introduces the setting, "there is a well in the field" (29:2); then the participants, "and oh, there are three flocks of sheep lying by it" (29:2); and then the focus of the story, "and look, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep" (29:6). By the repetition of this pattern the narrative shows a direct correspondence between the sections, the second being the beginning of the outworking of the first.

13 Some of these area temple tower with. a pathway winding around it, a tower with a stairlike entrance, and a staircase leading into a palace (see C. Houtman, "What Did Jacob See in His Dream at Bethel?" Vetus Testamentum 27 [19771:337-52;
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14 The connection between בְּלֵא ו and simmilitu involves a metathesis (see Sabatino Moscati, An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages [Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1964], p. 63).


18 If there is an implied connection to the ziggurat here, then this passage forms an antithesis to the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis which also has a Mesopotamian background. Comparing the two passages one could say that if there is communication between heaven and earth it is initiated in heaven (Gen. 28) and not on earth (Gen. 11).

19 Christ compared Himself to the stairway in John 1:51: "and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." He is the Mediator between heaven and earth; He is the Way to God.


21 The prepositional phrase can be translated "over it" or "beside it" or "beside him." The use in Genesis 18:1 suggests "beside him," but the context here suggests "over it" because God's realm is in the heavens, and because Jacob anointed the top of the stone.

22 The purpose of the casus pendens is to throw the independent nominative to the beginning for emphasis.

23 Fokkelman observes what he calls a sound fusion, a melting of consonants in the transition: נֹבַע נָבַע נָבַע is followed by נָבַע נָבַע נָבַע; the letters נָבַע נָבַע out of the prepositional phrase become the verb. He says, "The levels of sound and meaning have become integrated: they point to each other, they explain each other, they pervade each other" (Narrative Art, p. 59).

24 One clear example of this is Genesis 31:24 which records how God warned Laban in a dream not to harm Jacob (see also v. 29).


27 The shrine later became the place of corrupt, idolatrous worship (2 Kings 12. 28-29). Hosea alluded to this passage but altered the name by a wordplay from to לָבֵת לָבֵת to נָבַע נָבַע, "house of vanity" (i.e., idols, Hos. 4:15). Amos 5:5 said that "Bethel shall come to nothing" (i.e., be destroyed), but expresses this with 28 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 286.

29 Some biblical passages may suggest "Bethel" could be used as a divine epithet. Jeremiah 48:13 says that "Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel, their confidence." Zechariah 7:2 could be interpreted to read "Bethel-shar-ezzer," a personal name, instead of "the house of

30 Long, Etiological Narrative, p. 60.
31 Many translations begin the apodasis with "then the Lord will become my God," which is equally possible. If God actually promised to be his God in the words of the Abrahamic promises (as in Gen. 17:7), then it would not be something Jacob would be promising to do.

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Studies in the Book of Genesis

Part 4:

The Dispersion of the Nations in Genesis 11:1-9

Allen P. Ross

Introduction to the Passage

THE NATURE OF THE ACCOUNT

The narrative in Genesis 11:1-9 describes the divine intervention among the human family to scatter them across the face of the earth by means of striking at the heart of their unity— their language. A quick reading of the passage shows that the predominant idea is not the tower of Babel but this scattering. If the point is not simply the tower, then this passage does not present, as some have suggested, a Hebrew adaptation of the Greek Titans storming heaven to dislodge God. Rather, the characteristics of the people in this story are anxiety and pride through their own gregariousness.\(^1\) The tower, on the one hand, is born from the people's fear of being scattered across the earth; and on the other hand it is an attempt to frustrate God's plan to fill the earth (Gen. 9:1).

*The sin.* Since the story has the trappings of a judgment narrative in which Yahweh interrupts mankind's misguided activities and scatters them abroad, it may be assumed that the antithesis of this scattering must be the sin. The major error was not the building of a city, but the attempt of the race to live in one City.\(^2\) Therefore it appears that the human family was striving for unity, security, and social immortality (making a name) in defiance of God's desire for them to fill the earth.

*Divine punishment.* It is important to keep in mind that the "judgment" was not the destruction of the city but of the lan-
guage that united the people. It was shattered into a multiplicity of languages so that the common bond was destroyed. Thus the text is demonstrating that the present number of languages that form national barriers is a monument to sin.

*Divine prevention.* Since the people's purpose was to make a name for themselves and to achieve power through unity, the apostasy of the human spirit would shortly bring the race to the brink of another catastrophe such as the Deluge. By frustrating their communication and dividing them into nations, it is evident that "it is the will of God, so long as sin is present in the world, to employ nationalism in the reduction of sin." For ages people have restricted themselves to native manners and customs and regarded diverse languages of foreigners with great horror. Thus Israel was delivered from a people of "a strange language" (Ps. 114:1) and was frequently warned of destruction by a fierce nation whose language would not be understood and whose deep speech could not be comprehended (Deut. 28:49; Isa. 28:11; 33:19; Jer. 5:15). The language barrier brought sudden fear and prevented unification.

Ringgren summarized the twofold aspect of Yahweh's intervention in Genesis 11 as divine reaction to pride.

Theologically, the building of the tower in Gen. 11 is interpreted as an act of human arrogance and rebellion against God; accordingly, Yahweh intervenes against its builders and scatters them over the whole earth. This action of God is both punishment and a preventive measure; it prevents men from going too far in their pride.

Later prophets would draw on this narrative, recording the very beginnings of the divisions as they looked to the end of days when God Himself would unify mankind once again. Zephaniah 3:9-11 appears to be constructed antithetically to this passage with its themes in common with Genesis 11:1-9: the pure speech (i.e., one language), the gathering of the dispersed people (even from Cush), the removal of pride, and the service in the holy mountain. The miracle on the day of Pentecost is often seen as a harbinger of that end time.

**LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE PASSAGE**

The literary style of the narrative shows an artistic hand ordering the material in such a way as to mirror the ideas from the Babylonian background of the story as well as to contrast by means of antithetical parallelism the participants in the story. To such literary art, repetition and parallelism are essential.
Antithetical balance. In the antithetical parallelism of the narrative ideas are balanced against their counterparts. The story begins with the report of the unified situation at the beginning (11:1) and ends with a reminder of that unity and its resultant confusion for the scattering (11:9). This beginning and ending picture is reflected in the contrast of the dialogues and actions: 11:2-4 describes what the humans proceeded to do; 11:5-8 describes how Yahweh turned their work aside (beginning with the contrastive, "But Yahweh ... ").

Within these balanced sections many elements support the antithetical arrangement. As seen in the Hebrew, verse 1 is balanced with 9, 2 with 8, and 3 with 7, and the narrative turns at verse 5.10

Poetic devices. The mechanics of the writer can also be seen in the heavy alliteration and sound play throughout the account. First, the writer enhances the meaning of the ultimate word play (the בבל/בלבל ["confuse"/"Babel"] exchange) by his sounds. The letters ב, ל, and ב, culminating in the word בבל; are frequently used. Verse 3 reads ליהז הלברת לאבר; נבהת נברת לבימ; Verse 4 has נברת נביה. In verse 5 are the words בנו בני; and verse 7 has בבל בבל. In verse 8 the sounds continue with בבל בבל. And in verse 9 is the anticipated culmination of the sounds in בבל בבל ...

There also appears to be a play on the key word of the passage, ב ("scatter"). The word is frequently followed by the phrase, "across the face of the whole earth," בגדי על הארץ, which, interestingly, begins with the letter ב and ends with ב, thus reflecting ב.11 Other alliterations involve בגדי/גדי; and שים/ם.

Second, the wordplays in the passage strengthen the ideas. Bullinger calls such wordplays "paronomasia" which he describes as the employment of two words that are different in origin and meaning, but similar in sound and appearance to emphasize two things by calling attention to the similarity of sound.12 One is placed alongside the other and appears to be a repetition of it. Once the eye has caught the two words and the attention concentrated on them, then one discovers that an interpretation is put on the one by the other.

While this description gives the general nature of wordplays, it is too broad for distinguishing the types of wordplays within the group known as paronomasia. To be precise, it should be said that paronomasia involves a play on similarity of sound and some point in the meaning as well; those that have no point of contact
in meaning are best classified as phonetic wordplays such as
assonance, rhyme, alliteration, or epanastrophe.

This distinction becomes necessary in the exegesis of the
narrative. In verse 3 is the exhortation, לֶבֶן נֶבֶנְיָה, "let us make
bricks" (literally, "let us brick bricks"). Immediately there follows
a second exhortation: נֶבֶנְיָה לֶבֶן, "let us burn them hard"
(literally, "let us burn them for burning"). These are paronoma-

cias in the strict sense since they offer a sound play and are
etymologically connected.

However, the key play in the passage is not strictly parono-
masia since there is no connection etymologically between לַבֵּן
and לֶבֶן. It is a phonetic wordplay. The people would say that the
name was called "לֶבֶן" because Yahweh "made a babble"
the language.

All these devices enhance the basic antithetical structure of
the passage. Fokkelman illustrates this by connecting the par-
onomasia of verse 3, לֶבֶן נֶבֶנְיָה, with the response of God in verse
7, נֶבֶנְיָה לֶבֶן, in a sound-chiasmus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;let us make bricks&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The reversal of the order of the sounds reveals the basic idea
of the passage: The construction on earth is answered by the de-
struction from heaven; men build but God pulls down. The fact
that God's words are also in the form of man's words (as cohorta-
tive) adds a corroding irony to the passage. God sings with the
people while working against them.

The same point is stressed with לֶבֶן, נֶבֶנְיָה, and נֶבֶנְיָה לֶבֶן. To bring
everlasting fame (לֶבֶן) they unite in one spot (לֶבֶן) as the base of
operations for their attainment of fame which they make con-
ditional on the encroachment of נֶבֶנְיָה לֶבֶן, the abode of God. What
drives them is hubris. What calls out the nemesis of Yahweh from
heaven (לֶבֶן) and scatters them from there (own) is also hubris.
The "brackets" on the text illustrate this poignantly: what "all the
earth" sought to avoid, namely, dispersion "all over the earth,"
happened (cf. v. 1 and v. 9).

SETTING FOR THE PASSAGE

The Babylonian background. That this passage has Baby-
lon in mind is clear from the explication of the name "Babel" in
verse 9. The first time this term was used was in the Table of
Nations in Genesis 10 where the beginning of the kingdom was recorded in the exploits of Nimrod from Cush (10:10). Not only is there this direct reference to proud Babylon, but also other evidences show that the background of the story was Mesopotamian. Speiser says, "The episode points more concretely to Babylonia than does any other portion of primeval history and the background that is here sketched proves to be authentic beyond all expectations." 

Babylon was a thing of beauty to the pagan world. Every important city of Babylonia was built with a step-tower known as a ziggurat (ziggurratu). In Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon itself, in the area of Marduk's sanctuary known as E-sag-ila, "the house whose head is raised up," there was a seven-storied tower with a temple top that was known as E-temen-anki. This structure, measuring 90 meters by 90 meters at the base as well as being 90 meters high, became one of the wonders of the world. The tower was a symbol of Babylonian culture and played a major role in other cultures influenced by it.

The first of such towers must be earlier than Nebuchadnezzar's, for his were rebuildings of ancient patterns. Cassuto maintains that this reference must be to E-temen-anki (although he suggests that the occasion for the tradition giving rise to the satire would come from an earlier time, from the Hittite destruction of Babylon). Speiser does not agree. He points out that it cannot be E-temen-anki, which cannot antedate the seventh century. Therefore this account must be centuries earlier than E-temen-anki. Since Esarhaddon (seventh century) and Nebuchadnezzar (sixth century) were the first since Hammurabi to build such works, the biblical reference in Genesis 11 must be to a much earlier Babylon.

So while the actual Neo-Babylonian Empire's architecture cannot be the inspiration for this account, one must conclude that their buildings were rebuildings of some ancient tower located in the same area.

But when the literary parallels concerning this architecture are considered, some very significant correspondences to the narrative are noted.

First, there is a specific connection of this story with the account of the building of Babylon, recorded in the Akkadian Enuma Elish, tablet VI, lines 55-64:

When Marduk heard this,
Brightly glowed his features, like the days:
"Like that of lofty Babylon, whose building you have requested,
Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it the sanctuary."
The Anunnaki applied the implement;
For one year they molded bricks.
When the second year arrived,
They raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu.
Having built a stage tower as high as Apsu,
They set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil, Ea;
In their presence he adorned it with grandeur.24

Within this passage are several literary parallels to the biblical narrative. Line 62 reads, "They raised the head of Esagila mihrit apsi," (sa Esagila mihrit apsi ulla rest [su] ). Speiser notes the word play of ulla resisu with Esagila, which means "the structure which raises the head," explaining that it evokes a special value for the Sumerian name, giving it a significant meaning in Babylon.25 Thus he concludes that resam ullum became a stock expression for the monumental structures of Babylon and Assyria.

Speiser shows that apsu is a reference to the heavens. He allows that it often means "the deep," but that cannot be correct in the light of line 63 which says, "when they had built the temple tower of the upper (elite) apsu" (ibnuma ziggurat sa apsi elite). In line 62 then, mihrit apsi must be "toward heaven," and apsu must be celestial and not subterranean.26

A second important element is the bricks. The Hebrew text in Genesis 11:3 describes the brickmaking with a cognate accusative construction. Once the bricks are made, the tower is made. Speiser observes that the bricks figured predominantly in the Babylonian account where there is a year-long brick ritual.27 The Babylonian account not only records a similar two-step process (making bricks in the first year and raising the tower head in the second), but it also has a similar construction, using a cognate accusative, libittasu iltabnu (Hebrew: מִבְּטֵיתוּ לְתַבְּנָה). In fact, the Hebrew and Akkadian words are cognate. The similarity is striking.

So in Enuma Elish and Genesis there are at least three solid literary connections: the making of the tower for the sanctuary of the gods, with Genesis reporting the determination to build the tower and city in rebellion to God; the lofty elevation of its head into the heavens, with Genesis recording almost the same reference; and the making of the bricks before the building of the city, with Genesis describing the process with the same grammatical construction.
Another correspondence is reflected in the great pride of the builders. One of the purposes of the Babylonian creation epic at its composition was to show the preeminence of Babylon over all the cities of the country, and especially the supremacy of Marduk over all deities. They were so pleased with themselves that they considered Babylon to be a celestial city, prepared by the Anunnaki gods and made for Marduk on behalf of his victory over Tiamat. It then became the pattern for the earthly city (*Enuma Elish*, tablet VI, lines 113-15). In fact Babylon, that metropolitan city for so many peoples, claimed to be the origination of society, their city having descended from heaven. Herein is the immense pride of Babylon.

Therefore with this world-famous city and tower culture claiming to be the heavenly plan and beginning of creation, the record in Genesis 11 is a counterblast and a polemic. To communicate this most forcefully, the text employs literary elements of that ancient, traditional theme preserved in the Babylonian culture, but the contents and thrust of the message differ remarkably.

The differences are pointed out in part by Vos. First, Genesis implies that nothing like this had ever been built before by man, but the ziggurats represent traditional workings. Second, Genesis presents the building as evidence of their disobedience, but the Babylonian work was for the purpose of worshiping a local deity. Third, Genesis describes this as the work of one united race of people that became the basis of the scattering and confusion into languages and tribes, but the ziggurats were man-made mountains of a national group (their towers were the symbol of their culture). Also these towers developed gradually over the centuries after the diffusion and scattering.

So Genesis, in setting forth the account of the divine intervention at Babel in the ancient past, deliberately alludes to the arrogance of Babylon that was represented in their literature. The result is a satire on the thing of glory and beauty of the pagan world. The biblical writer, having become familiar with the vanglorious words in the traditions of Babylon, weaves his account for the purpose of deriding the literary traditions of that ancient city and establishing the truth. In fact traditions from Mesopotamia recorded the ancient division of languages as well. The Sumerians had recorded that there was originally one language since everyone came to worship Enlil with one tongue (*Enmerkar Epic*, lines 141-46).
Cassuto suggests a collection of satirical ideas that would have given rise to the Genesis narrative, and he paraphrases them as follows:

You children of Babylon ..., you called your city Babel--Babili, "Gate of god," or Bab-ilani, "Gate of gods"--and your tower you designated "House of the foundation of heaven and earth." You desired that the top of your tower should be in heaven.... You did not understand that, even if you were to raise the summit of your ziggurat ever so high, you would not be nearer to Him than when you stand upon the ground; nor did you comprehend that He who in truth dwells in heaven, if he wishes to take a closer look at your lofty tower, must needs come down.... Your intention was to build for yourselves a gigantic city that would contain all mankind and you forgot that it was God's will to fill the whole earth with human settlements, and that God's plan would surely be realized.... You were proud of your power, but you should have known that it is forbidden to man to exalt himself, for only the Lord is truly exalted, and the pride of man is regarded by Him as iniquity that leads to his downfall and degradation--a punishment befitting the crime....

On account of this, your dominion was shattered and your families were scattered over the face of the whole earth. Behold, how fitting is the name that you have given to your city! It is true that in your language it expresses glory and pride, but in our idiom it sounds as though it connoted confusion--and confusion of tongues heard therein, which caused its destruction and the dispersion of its inhabitants in every direction. 33

Babylon was the prototype of all nations, cities, and empires that despise God's instructions and raise themselves in pride. 34 Babylon represented man's megalomaniacal attempt to achieve world peace and unity by domestic exploitation and power. They would be brought down in confusion; herein was the warning to the new nation of Israel: any disobedient nation would be abased and brought low in spite of her pride, ingenuity, and strength.

The "Babylon" motif became the common representation for the antitheocratical program. Later writers drew on this theme and used the name as a symbol for the godless society with its great pretensions. Isaiah 47:8-13 portrayed Babylon's pleasures, sins, and superstitions. Isaiah 13:19 pictured her as "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride"; and Isaiah 14:13 describes her sinful arrogance in exalting her throne above the Most High in the heavens only to be brought low. Jeremiah also predicted the cup of vengeance on this arrogant city (Jer. 51).

Daniel recorded her persecutions against Judah. And Revelation 17-18 applies the theme to the spiritual Babylon in the eschaton, showing that it was her sins that reached heaven and
brought the catastrophe to her, thus preparing the way for the true celestial city to come down to earth.\(^{35}\)

*The setting in the primeval narratives.* The present story of the scattering is part of the primeval events of Genesis which give a picture of man in open rebellion to God and of God intervening in judgment on each situation.\(^{36}\) The scattering of the race from Babel forms the capstone to the primeval history of the human race.\(^{37}\) This development of mankind is accurately described by Kidner.

The primeval history reaches its fruitless climax as man, conscious of new abilities, prepares to glorify and fortify himself by collective effort. The elements of the story are timelessly characteristic of the spirit of the world. The project is typically grandiose; men describe it excitedly to one another as if it were the ultimate achievement—very much as modern man glories in his space projects. At the same time they betray their insecurity as they crowd together to preserve their identity and control their fortunes.\(^{38}\)

So it is with this story that the common history of all mankind comes to an abrupt end, which leaves the human race hopelessly scattered across the face of the entire earth. It is this that makes the present narrative so different from those preceding it: In each judgment there was a gracious provision for hope but in this judgment there is none. It does not offer a token of grace, a promise of any blessing, a hope of salvation, or a way of escape. There is no clothing for the naked sinner, no protective mark for the fugitive, no rainbow in the dark sky. There is no ray of hope. The primeval age ends with judgmental scattering and complete confusion. The blessing is not here; the world must await the new history.

In view of this, the story of the scattering of the nations is actually the turning point of the book from primeval history to the history of the blessing. From this very confused and dispersed situation nations would develop in utter futility until God would make a great nation through one man who himself would be "scattered" from this alluvial plain to the land of Canaan. The blessings of final redemption and unification would come through his seed.

The beginning of Genesis 11 presupposes a linguistic unity and localization comparable to the beginning of Genesis 10. Since the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 describes the many families of the earth "after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, in their nations," and Genesis 11 describes the
divine intervention to scatter them, the question is how this story of the dispersion is compatible with the Table. They appear to be reversed chronologically.

Most modern scholars follow the critical view that Genesis 11 is independent of the ethnographic Table and is fundamentally irreconcilable with it. However, this is not seen as a major obstacle, for as von Rad states, "The chapters must be read together because they are intentionally placed next to each other in spite of their antagonism." So while critical scholars are bothered by the antagonisms, they recognize that the two chapters are complementary in referring to the same scattering.

The Table of Nations gives absolutely no explanation for the scattering, but "that the author was intending right along to treat of the confusion of tongues appears from 10:25." There it is stated that in the days of Peleg ("Division") was the earth divided. Writers have explained this division as some sort of tribal split, or some piece of trivia about conditions at the time, such as; for example, irrigation ditches. The word יָדָם is often used for trenches and irrigation ditches, but the implication of the Table is toward universal events. It is worth noting that the root word occurs in Psalm 55:9 (Eng., 10) for a moral division: "Destroy, 0 LORD, and divide (יָדָם) their tongues" (author's translation here and throughout the article). The prayer is that God would break apart their counsel into contending factions, an end that is comparable to the story of the division of the nations. So the point of contact appears to be the birth of Peleg (and thus his naming) in Genesis 10. At that point the incident of chapter 11 would have happened, causing the people to spread out into the earth until they settled in their tribes as described in chapter 10. Chapter 11 is the cause; chapter 10 is the effect.

The passages are arranged in a manner consistent with Genesis. The broad survey is given first; the narrowing and selection and/or explanation are given afterward. The order is thematic and not chronological. The choice of this reversed order is a stroke of genius. Jacob stated it well: "The placement of chapter 10 before this one is a special refinement. The absurdity of the undertaking becomes obvious if we know the numerical nations into which mankind should grow."

THE PURPOSE OF THE DISPERSION NARRATIVE

It should be clear by now that the story of the dispersion is a sequel to the Table of Nations and is designed to explain how the
nations speak different languages in spite of their common origin and how they found their way to the farthest corners of the earth. The major theme of the passage is the dispersion of the nations because of their rebellious pride and apostasy in uniting at Babel. But the story is more than an explanation of the scattering; it is an explanation of the problems due to the existence of nations.

It was at Babel—that city founded by Nimrod, a descendant of Ham through Cush; that city known for its pride and vanity; that seat of rebellion toward the true God and pagan worship of the false gods—that Yahweh turned ingenuity and ambition into chaos and confusion so that the thing the people feared most came on them and that their desire to be men of renown was suddenly turned against them. For the Israelite nation the lesson was clear: If she was to survive as a nation, she must obey God's will, for the nation that bristles with pride and refuses to obey will be scattered. Thus the account of the scattering at Babel has a theological significance for God's people.

Exegesis of the Passage

PROLOGUE (11:1)

The first verse informs the reader that the entire race had a common language, thus showing that this beginning is parallel to 10:1. Knowing the previous arrangement of the scattered nations in chapter 10, Jacob explains that a tone of irony is already sounded in this verse.

The whole earth (= the inhabitants) had one "lip" (רברג to indicate speech) and one vocabulary (כיבור to indicate the content of what was said). The point of this prologue is clear: The entire race was united by a common language.

MAN'S PROCEDURE (11:2-4)

Settlement (11:2). The narrative records that the human family migrated "off east" (לָטְפִים) and settled in the region of ancient Babylon. The verb used to describe their journey (וַיָּנָה) carries the sense of bedouins moving tents by stages. This wandering continued in an easterly direction from Armenia until they settled (וַיִּשְׁכָּנֵו) in Shinar where they found a plain. This "valley of the world," as the Talmud calls it, became the designated place for the nomads-turned-settlers.

Resolution (11:3-4). The resolve of the race comes in two stages: in verse 3 they made bricks, and in verse 4, motivated by
their initial success, they moved to a grander scale by building a city with a tower. Bush follows Josephus in designating Nimrod as the leader of this founding of Babylon.⁵²

In their zeal for societal development, alliance, and fame, and with all the optimism of a beginning people, they began to organize their brickmaking. They were an ingenious lot, for they lacked the proper stone and clay and had to make do with makeshift materials.⁵³ The writer's attitude toward this comes across in an appropriate pun: they had no clay (דד) but they used asphalt (שש). Jacob suggests the effect of this assonance sounds like a child's play song.⁵⁴

Met by initial success they advanced to a greater resolution: "Come, let us build. . . ." Couched in the same grammatical construction as the preceding resolve, their words display that they would use the materials made to make a city "with a tower. " The circumstantial clause draws the reader's attention to the tower. Once built, this tower would provide the pattern for fortresses and acropolises for others.⁵⁵ Building it with its top in the heavens may reflect the bold spirit of the workers, even though it is hyperbolic language used to express security (cf. Deut. 1:28).

The purpose of their building venture was fame. They wished to find security by arrogantly making a name--a desire that is satirized in verse 9. But their desire to be renowned was betrayed by their fear of the oblivion of dispersion. Richardson observes this motivation.

The hatred of anonymity drives men to heroic feats of valour or long hours of drudgery; or it urges them to spectacular acts of shame or of unscrupulous self-preferment. In the word forms it attempts to give the honour and the glory to themselves which properly belongs to the name of God.⁵⁶

Thus the basic characteristics of culture are seen here: underlying anxiety (the fear of being separated and disconnected) and the desire for fame (a sense of security in a powerful reputation).⁵⁷

THE INTERVENTION OF YAHWEH (11:5-8)⁵⁸

The investigation (11:5-6). The second half of the passage reflects the first, beginning with Yahweh's investigation of the city and the tower which the humans had begun to build.

The description, written so anthropomorphically, describes
Yahweh's close interest and participation in the affairs of man.\textsuperscript{59} He did not need to come down to look at their work (in fact His coming down implies prior knowledge). Procksch clarified this by pointing out that "Yahweh must draw near, not because he is near-sighted, but because he dwells at such tremendous height and their work is so tiny. God's movement must therefore be understood as a remarkable satire on man's doing."\textsuperscript{60} Or in the words of Cassuto one could say that no matter how high they towered, Yahweh still had to descend to see it. Yahweh's coming down does not alone strike this note of satire. The parallel construction of the cohortatives (11:7) reflects their plans made earlier.\textsuperscript{61} The point to be made is clear: The tower that was to reach the heavens fell far short.

The purpose of His coming down was "to see" the work. This is the second anthropomorphic expression in the line and announces that He will give the city a close investigation. The narrative is filled with condescension. In referring to them as בנים של הארץ ("sons of the earth"), he shows them to be earthlings. This strikes at the heart of the Babylonian literature which credited the work to the Anunnaki gods. The work, according to Genesis, was terrestrial, not celestial.

Verse 6 records the results of that investigation: "And Yahweh said, 'If as one people all having one language they have begun to act this way, now nothing that they propose to do will be out of their reach.'" The similarity of style and wording to Genesis 3:22 is most striking. The potential for calamity is dangerous to the race, and God will prevent it.\textsuperscript{62} The verb לсталא is used here; the beginnings of man are commonly counterproductive.\textsuperscript{63} They will nullify the purposes of God in favor of their own purposes which are within reach. They will be at liberty for every extravagance if they can think only of their own confederation.

The resolution (11:7). Continuing to speak, Yahweh says, "Come, let Us go down and confound their language so that they cannot understand one another."

The internal difficulty concerns the relationship of the word הלל ("let Us go down") with הלאמר ("But [Yahweh] came down") of verse 5. The critical approach is to divide the two elements into strata, but that is not a satisfactory solution.\textsuperscript{64} Dillmann simply saw a return to heaven first, then a reflection (comparing 3:22), and then the coming in judgment.\textsuperscript{65} This may be the simplest way of understanding it. Cassuto takes הלאמר, "and He said, "as an explanatory connection of contemporaneous actions: "But
Yahweh came down ... thinking רְמִ֣עַ (literally, ‘saying’) ... they are one ... let us go down....

The second verb describes the actual purpose: "let Us confound." It was this confusion [טְלֵב] that led to the diversity of their understanding and thus to their dispersion. Bush explains how this would come about.

This was to cause a dispersion of the multitudes congregated at Babylon; an end which did not require for its accomplishment the instantaneous formation of new languages, but simply such a confusion in the utterance of the old, as should naturally lead to misapprehension, discord and division. The dialectic discrepancies, however, thus originating, though perhaps not very great at first, would become gradually more and more marked, as men became more widely separated from each other, and by the influence of climate, laws, customs, religion, and various other causes, till they finally issued in substantially different languages.

Once the understanding of one another was confounded, the division would be effected.

The effect (11:8). "So Yahweh scattered them from there across the face of the whole earth, and they ceased building the city." Their greatest fear (v. 4) came on them. The place of unity (מִשְׁמֶנֶה) became the place of dispersion (מִשְׁפָּת). Their view was toward centrality; God moved them universally. The result of this dispersion meant that the city was unfinished as they had planned it. The rebellious race as a unified people did not fulfill their goal.

EPILOGUE (11:9)

In a marvelously clever "etymological" word play, verse 9 announces, "Therefore [that is why] its name is called Babel, because there Yahweh confused the lip [language] of all the earth and scattered them across the face of the whole earth."

The formula נָעַל + לֵב with אֲרֵ֖ב is quite common as an explanatory inference from a reported event and is used most often with place names. Here it introduces the meaning given by the Israelites for Babylon. The word תָּלֵב provided a satirical meaning of “confusion” for the proud Babylonians' name. The story shows how this gate of the gods fell far short of expectations, ending in confusion and chaos.

So Yahweh scattered them across the face of the earth. The text need not imply that the confusion was immediately reached nor the scattering instantaneous. The narrator fixed this point from which the division of the peoples and the languages would begin and move ever farther.
Conclusion

Irony is seen in the beginning and the ending of this passage. The group at Babel began as the whole earth (11:1), but now they were spread over the whole earth (11:9). By this the lesson is clarified: God's purpose will be accomplished in spite of the arrogance and defiance of man's own purposes. He brings down the proud, but exalts the faithful.

The significance of this little story is great. It explains to God's people how the nations were scattered abroad. Yet the import goes much deeper. The fact that it was Babylon, the beginning of kingdoms under Nimrod from Cush, adds a rather ominous warning: Great nations cannot defy God and long survive. The new nation of Israel need only survey the many nations around her to perceive that God disperses and curses the rebellious, bringing utter confusion and antagonism among them. If Israel would obey and submit to God's will, then she would be the source of blessing to the world.

Unfortunately, Israel also raised her head in pride and refused to obey the Lord God. Thus she too was scattered across the face of the earth.

Notes

3 Delitzsch explains that the primitive language through this intervention "died the death from which comparative philology is incapable of awakening it" (Franz Delitzsch, A New Commentary on Genesis, trans. Sophia Taylor [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 18991, p. 355).
7 Spoken of in the singular, the "pure lip" must mean the language barriers will be broken down to make one universal tongue. The second idea in the expression means that their speech will be cleansed.
8 The Bible uses this word for both Ethiopia and the Kassite power. What the connection is remains a matter of debate. In this connection, the similarities between Ethiopian and Akkadian are interesting for speculation.

10 Fokkelman diagrams it as follows:

A כֵּלָה תָּאֹרְץ שִׁפְּתָן אָחָת (v. 1)
B שָׁמַש (v. 2)
  C אֲרֵי שׁ וַעֲרֵי (v. 3)
  D וַעֲבֹת נֶאֱמָה לְבוֹנָם (v. 3)
  E לְבוֹנָה לְמִלָּה (v. 4)
  F לֶשׁ מִסְפֹּר (v. 5)
  X נַעֲדוּ יְהוָה לִבָּא (v. 5)
  F’ לָאָשָׁר בֵּנוֹ הַחֲדָסָה (v. 5)
D לְבַבָּה יֵּֽבֵל (v. 7)
  C’ וַעֲבֹת הַרְבָּה (v. 7)
  B’ שָׁמַש (v. 8)
A’ כֵּל הַאָרְץ (פּוּל) (v. 9)

(See J. P. Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis [Assen Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975], p. 22.) In verse 1 is the strong statement of one language for the race. In verse 9 Yahweh confused them. In verse 3 they spoke to one another, but in verse 7 they were not able to understand each other. In verses 3 and 4 is the workers' double cohortative, and in verse 7 is Yahweh's cohortative mirroring their words. In verse 4 the people wish a tower in the heavens, and in verse 7 Yahweh comes down from heaven. In verse 4 they desire a name; in verse 9 the name is called Babel. In verse 4 they fear scattering; in verse 8 they are scattered (U. Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, trans. J. Abrahams [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1964]), pp. 230-34).

11 While some may find such a discussion fanciful or strained, it cannot be ignored. There is in good literature a clear choice of words and a deliberate juxtapositioning of phrases to reflect and enhance the ideas. The style in this section and in much of Genesis 1--11 has been a prime factor in distinguishing this section from the second part in Genesis, namely, chapters 12-50.


13 Fokkelman points out that the fact that one word is the word with a prefix and the other is the root itself in no way destroys the effect of the sound of these letters which are played on six times in the story (Narrative Art in Genesis, pp. 14-15).


15 Hubris on the positive side is pride, megalomania, a wanting to be like God, and an overstepping of one's bounds. On the negative side it is the fear of having to live without safety and existential security, of being lonely and vulnerable. So their hubris leads them to act impiously and brings down God's judgment. It is crime and punishment, both of which are caused by pride that oversteps bounds (Fokkelman, Narrative Art in Genesis, p. 16; see also Donald E. Gowan, When Man Becomes God: Humanism and Hubris in the Old Testament (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1975)).

16 E. A. Speiser, Genesis, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964), p. 75. It is riot to be inferred from this statement that Speiser holds a conservative view of this Scripture.

17 It is necessary to say at the outset that it is not that the writer saw a ziggurat and composed a myth about the origin of languages, and that this myth somehow found its way into the Book of Genesis. Rather, Genesis implies that such towers...
had not been built before this and this would be quite unique (Howard F. Vos, *Genesis and Archaeology* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1963], p. 47).


20 Gressmann, *The Tower of Babel*, pp. 15-19. Gressmann thought the tower structure was related to their understanding of the world with God at the pinnacle, the door of heaven, and man on the slopes of the artificial mountain. The entire world rested on the breast of the underworld. Thus it was fitting for this to be included in primeval events. Most would view it as an artificial high place of worship erected on the plain.

21 Cassuto, *From Noah to Abraham*, p. 228. Cassuto is (unnecessarily) assuming that the traditions demand a city and a tower in ruins. The judgment passage, however, says absolutely nothing of that at all. The most that is said is that this project was not completed.

22 E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 75. This argumentation is used here simply to show the difficulty in ascribing the identification to E-temen-anki even if one were to take the late date of the composition in accordance with a J document.

23 E. A. Speiser, "Word Plays on the Creation Epic's Version of the Founding of Babylon," *Orientalia*, n.s. 25 (1956):317-18. Speiser shows that there is a chronological problem with the date of J and E-temen-anki, but then he adds in his argumentation that other temples also had the -anki element in the name, such as Borsippa's which was E-ur-me-imin-anki, "house of the seven preceptors of heaven and earth," so that we are not limited to one reference that first fits the idea with -anki. His point is that the source was literary and not monumental (architectural).

24 James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 3d ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 60. Speiser, who translated the Akkadian myths and epics for Pritchard's work, states at the outset that the majority of the scholars would assign Enuma Elish to the Old Babylonian period on internal evidence alone. Unger explains that it was composed in the days of Hammurabi in the mold of political and religious propaganda to show the preeminence of Babylon and supremacy of Marduk. "However, the poem itself, though one of the literary masterpieces of the Babylonian Semites, goes back to much earlier times. It is clearly based upon the earlier traditions of the Sumerians, the non-Semitic precursors of the Babylonian Semites in lower Babylonia" (Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, p. 27).

25 Speiser, "Word Plays," p. 319. He compares this to other and similar phrases to show that they did it frequently.


27 The making of the first brick was a trial ordeal before the gods and was to be accomplished by the king. The ceremony of the bricks was to be a sign that the service was offered to the gods (Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948], pp. 272-74).

28 *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, s.v. "Bbhel," by H. Ringgren, 1:467. Ringgren suggests that the metropolis with so many peoples (= lan-
languages) was natural for such an account of the dispersion.

29 Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, p. 227.

30 It seems clear that the story did not originate in Babylon. There is no exact correspondence, but that is to be expected since it is a travesty on Babel. Gressmann thought the story came from Babylon to the Assyrians and was brought to the Israelites by the Arameans, but that is unlikely (Gressmann, The Tower of Babel, p. 5). There were stories of the glories of Babylon with all the towers and cult mountains even in Palestine (Gerhard von Rad, Genesis, trans. John Marks [London: SCM Press, 1972], p. 146). Later it would be recorded by the classical writers: Diodorus 2.7; Herodotus 1.178; Strabo 16.1.5; and Pliny 6.121.

31 Vos, Genesis and Archaeology, p. 47.


33 Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, pp. 229-30. Cassuto has attempted to reconstruct the type of satirical material behind the passage by relating the passage to the time when Babylon was sacked by the Hittites. The idea of the message as a polemic (against what the Israelites would have known Babylon claimed for herself as opposed to the truth) is an accurate presentation of the message, but Cassuto does not treat the text with precision. In the first place, Genesis presents it as a universal judgment on the race collected in Shinar and not one group of people scattered by the Hittites. True, Cassuto is looking for some occasion and the Hittite invasion is a happy one for him. However, that is unwarranted. Second, there is no hint whatsoever that the city and the tower were reduced to rubble. They were just not completed. Third, the text is not saying that all the languages could be spoken there but that one was once in the beginning and God confounded it. Cassuto's attempt to take a naturalistic explanation to the occasion for the text weakens it.


35 Kidner, Genesis, p. 111.

36 Ryle observed that "we are led to suspect that the mystery of the origin of distinct languages belongs to the dim obscurity of the infancy of the human race, an infinitely remote and prehistoric age" (Herbert E. Ryle, The Book of Genesis [Cambridge: University Press, 1914], p. 144).

37 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 143.

38 Kidner, Genesis, p. 109.

39 John A. Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910), p. 224. Skinner was quick to add that the inconsistency is not such that would hinder the collector of traditions from putting the two in historical sequence.

40 Von Rad, Genesis, pp. 147-48.


42 Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis, p. 220.

43 This is suggested by Driver who follows Sayce in the suggestion (S. R. Driver, The Book of Genesis [London: Methuen & Co., 1913], p. 130).

44 Josephus referred the dispersion to the time of Peleg and related the whole story to the efforts of Nimrod (Antiquities of the Jews 1.146, and Apion 1.19). Most traditional scholars have followed this line.

45 According to Genesis 11:10, 12, 14, and 16 Peleg was in the fifth generation after the Flood. At this time, according to Keil, there could have been 30,000 people on the earth. That may be a bit generous, but even a conservative estima-
The Dispersion of the Nations in Genesis 11:1-9


46 For example, Genesis 37 records the sale of Joseph into Egypt. The story line of Genesis 38 traces the family of Judah into further generations. Chapter 39, however, traces the account of Joseph from his sale into Egypt. The same could be posited for chapter 1 (the total survey of creation) and chapter 2 (the selective discussion of the main elements of the creation, viz., man and woman). The princes of Edom (chap. 36) are also discussed in some development before the narration returns to the story.

47 Jacob, The First Book of the Bible, p. 80.

48 The concept of dispersion or scattering of peoples was an ancient one. Kitchen deals with the idea of exile and scattering in the ancient literature to show that the concept was real (fearfully real) for Israel (Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Ancient Orient, 'Deuteronomism,' and the Old Testament," in New Perspectives on the Old Testament, ed. J. Barton Payne [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970], pp. 1-24).

49 Cassuto entitles the first half of the narrative, "Many Are the Plans in the Mind of Man" (Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, p. 238).

50 Jacob, The First Book of the Bible, p. 79.

51 Isaiah 19:18 describes those who speak the language of Canaan; Isaiah 33:19 portrays the foreigners with deep speech and stammering tongue; Ezekiel 3:5 describes the people as deep of lip (= strange speech) and heavy of tongue (= hard language). The lip, mouth, or tongue were frequently employed in metonomy to represent the speech or the language.


53 Making bricks to replace the unavailable stones would further feed the pride of the people who would rise above their difficulties. These bricks (libittu) are mud bricks (Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, s.v. "libittu").

54 Jacob, The First Book of the Bible, p. 77.

55 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 146. Several examples of this are seen in Judges 8:9; 9:46; 2 Chronicles 14:6; and Isaiah 2:15.

56 Richardson, Genesis I -XI, p. 128.

57 Von Rad, Genesis, p. 145.

58 Cassuto called this section, "It Is the Purpose of the Lord That Will Be Established" (From Noah to Abraham, p. 244).

59 Midrash Pirke of R. Eliczer (c. 14) records ten comings down of the Lord: Paradise, Babel, Sodom, the Bush, Sinai, twice at the Rock, twice at the Tabernacle, and once in the last day. The coming down was viewed as Yahweh's revealing of Himself. It is seen in Scripture as the divine intervention breaking through the course of events (Exod. 19:20; 34:5; Num. 11:25; 12:5); however, one should also see Exodus 3:8 and Numbers 11:7 (for deliverance and blessing).


60 Consequently, this writer takes the waw antithetically: "But Yahweh came down" - in contrast to their efforts to ascend.

61 Throughout these verses the divine mood is not anger for depravity but rather laughter at foolishness (Jacob, The First Book of the Bible, p. 79). Kidner observed that the note of foreboding marks a father's concern and not a rival's. He shows that it is like Christ's words in Luke 23:31, "If they do these things in a green tree . . . " (Kidner, Genesis, p. 110). It is better to have division than to have collective apostasy in unity and peace.

62 Compare Nimrod's beginning with kingdoms and Noah's beginning with viniculture.
The two-recension theory bypasses the issue. It still remains a surprise that a
"redactor" would leave such an incongruity unrevised (Cassuto, *From Noah to
Abraham*, p. 246).

He offers as examples for this construction Genesis 26:22 ("thinking, for the
LORD now...") and Exodus 2:10 ("she named...reflecting. (Cassuto, *From
Noah to Abraham*, p. 246).

The word "Us" is taken here as a plural of majesty as in the earlier chapters
of Genesis. For a discussion of its use with verbs, see Gerhard F. Hasel, "The
Meaning of 'Let Us' in Gn 1:26," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 13


See Exodus 1:12 and 1:10 for a similar situation. The Egyptians were afraid
Israel would multiply, but the more they attempted to stop it, the more they
multiplied.

Burke O. Long, *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the Old Testament*
(Berlin: Alfred Topelmann, 1968), p. 3.

The name in the Achaemenid literature came to mean "the gate of God"
(Bab-ill), or perhaps "the gate of the gods." In Persian it is Babirus. In Sumerian
it is KA.DINGIR.K(A). The idea that Babylon was one of the oldest cities (Gen.
10:10) was current in Babylon itself, for the name is believed to have been proto-
Euphratian and part of the heritage of the earliest pre-Sumerian or Semitic etymology.

*The Encyclopedia Judaica* (s.v. "Babylon", p. 31) mentions this as the view of
B. Landsberger and refers the reader to *Die Serie ana ittisu* (1937) for the
discussion. The first mention of Babylon in cuneiform texts is from the period of
the Third Dynasty of Ur when it was a provincial government.

Bush illustrated how the connotative meaning carried by saying that there
can be no doubt that the Latin words *balbus* ("stammerer") and *balbutio* ("stam-
mering") derive their origin from Hebrew יבב, or, by the doubling of the first
radical, *balbel*, *bilbel*, from which latter form of the word comes -n, closely
related to the English and German babble. The Greek ἐλλαξα (by commutation
of liquids for ἐλλαξα), "barbarian," primarily signifying a person of rude or
outlandish pronunciation, is doubtlessly referring to the same root (Bush, *Notes
on Genesis*, 1:178). *The Oxford English Dictionary* (s.v. "babble"), however, says
of babble that "in none [of these languages] can its history be carried far back; as
yet it is known in English as early as anywhere else.... No direct connexion with
Babel can be traced; though association with that may have affected the senses."

Figart suggests that this point would be the logical place for the development
of races to begin. The text of Genesis 11:6 makes a point of the unity of the race
("one people"), but according to Genesis 10 they are dispersed according to
families, nations, tongues, and lands. He says, "Again, if God intervened and
miraculously changed man's looks, as well as his language, then there is no need
to account for these changes through isolation, environment, or culture. This is
not to dismiss the known effects of these three factors; we have already shown
some possible changes. Yet, if God did the initial changing of genetic structure,
then those other factors were only modifying means within the limits set by God.
As a matter of fact, this is all they could be in any interpretation" (Thomas O.
House, 1973], p. 45). Figart then proceeds to mention places in Scripture where
God does intervene and change the structure of mankind (the Fall and the
Rapture). He concludes that the silence of the Table concerning Negroid and
Mongoloid peoples is to be related to the purpose of the Table, that is, the rela-
tionship of Israel to her neighbors (p. 49).
Studies in the Book of Genesis

Part 3:

The Table of Nations in
Genesis 10--Its Content

Allen P. Ross

The previous article in this series dealt with the structure of the Table of Nations in Genesis 10. The deliberate design in its construction, symmetry, and unity were examined in an effort to understand its purpose as a הֵדֵקָה. But in addition to the evidence from its structure, there is a wealth of information about the nations of the world that is important for the complete understanding of this chapter within the message of Genesis.

The Analysis of the Passage

The heading of the chapter (Gen. 10:1) declares that this is the record of the particulars of what became of Shem, Ham, and Japheth after the Flood. The verse serves not only as a heading for the Table, but also as a literary connection back to Genesis 9:18 and 28. It is to be read with the oracle of Noah in mind!

THE SONS OF JAPHETh (10:2-5)

In the listing of Noah's sons, Japheth usually comes last. But here he is first because the tribes descended from Japheth were spread across the remote lands of the north and therefore were less involved in Israel's history.

The connection of Japheth and Ἰαπετός of the Greek tradition is striking. In both Greek and Hebrew traditions, then, Ἰαπετός was the ancestor of the Greeks. Genesis, however, shows him to be fully human. He is simply the ancestor of many north-
ern tribes who were non-Semitic in physiognomy, language, and custom. The sons of Japheth are seven. Gomer, mentioned also in Ezekiel 38:6, represents the Cimmerians, thought to be of the same stock as the Scythians. Magog is also mentioned in Ezekiel (38:2 and 39:6) as the land of Gog, the region between Armenia and Cappadocia; the name seems to represent the Scythian hordes southeast of the Black Sea. Madia (יַדִּי) is the normal Hebrew word for the Medes (Isa. 13:17) or Media (2 Kings 17:6), east of Assyria and southwest of the Caspian Sea. Even though the Median Empire was not formed until the seventh century, this does not mean that such a people were not known earlier as a group in the Lake Van area. The text of Shalmaneser III refers to them in a way that implies they were older inhabitants.

Javan is the general word for the Hellenic race, used throughout the Old Testament for the Ionians who dwelt in western Asia Minor.

Tubal and Meshech are always found together in the Bible; they represent northern military states (Ezek. 27:13; 32:26; 38:2; 39:1; and Isa. 66:19). Tubal is equivalent to Tibareni in Pontus; and Meshech is located in the Moschian mountains near Armenia. Their range was from eastern Asia Minor to the Black Sea.

Tiras has been identified in classical writings as the Thracians living in the area of the river Tiras. It is now popular to identify them as the Pelasgian pirates of the Aegean coasts mentioned in Merneptah's list of seafaring peoples.

From these seven, seven more were derived. From Gomer came Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. Ashkenaz appears to represent a northern branch of Indo-Germanic tribes related to the Scythians. Riphath may bear a remote resemblance to the name of the river Rhebas near the Bosphorous, or the Riphaean mountains to the west. Josephus suggested these were the Paphlagonians. Togarmah seems to represent the extreme north in Ezekiel 27:14 and 38:6.

From Javan came four "sons"--two geographical names and two tribal names--all of which are kin to the Greeks. Elishah is to be identified with the place Alashiyah on the island of Cyprus. Tarshish is the name of a distant coast reached only by sea (Isa. 66:19; Jer. 10:9; Ezek. 27:12). It has been identified with several places on the southern coasts of Asia Minor, places founded by Phoenician shippers. Kittim is preserved in the
name of Kition (or Kettion), also on the island of Cyprus;\textsuperscript{16} this plural noun refers to the people who inhabited that island, as well as other islands east of Rhodes.

Dodanim, the last of the four from Javan, is difficult to identify because of a textual problem. The word, spelled "Roda-nim" in 1 Chronicles 1:7, would represent the inhabitants of Rhodes. But the Qere at that passage suggests the spelling "Dodanim." Moreover, Ezekiel lists a Dedan among northern merchants (27:15). Neiman suggests they are the Dodanoi, the people of Dodona, the most ancient oracle in Greece.\textsuperscript{17}

These descendants of Japheth may be broadly summarized as Cimmerians, Scythians, Medes, Hellenes, and Thracians. From the fourteen names given, the text adds that from these the isles of the nations were divided in lands, by tongues, after families, in nations. They dwell in remote lands and distant isles.

It should be noted in passing that these names occur frequently in prophetic writings. In Genesis the great military hordes and western merchants are rather remote. They do not come into play, so far as the destiny of Israel in the land is concerned, until much later. Genesis knows something about them, but they are far beyond the movements of the patriarchs. They too will eventually subjugate the inhabitants of the land.

THE SONS OF HAM (10:6-20)

More attention is given to the line of Ham than to that of Japheth or Shem. Ham's line has four branches: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. All four are probably place names for Nubia-Egypt, Upper and Lower Egypt, Libya, and Phoenicia-Palestine respectively. In addition, the descendants of these four are both places and tribes.

Ham is the ancestor of all these people from Phoenicia to Africa. The etymology of the word Ham is disputed,\textsuperscript{18} but it is used to depict countries in close proximity to Egypt.

Cush is the "eldest son" according to the plan of the Table. In antiquity this was an independent kingdom on the southern flank of Egypt; and especially during the reign of Kamose it served as the backbone of the Egyptian army, helping to expel the Asiatics (Hyksos).\textsuperscript{19} So the list begins in the far south with the African tribes known to the Greeks as Ethiopians.

Mizraim lies to the north of Cush. The word occurs almost ninety times in the Old Testament for Egypt.
Put is used six times in the Bible, usually representing a warlike people used as mercenaries in the Egyptian armies (e.g., Ezek. 27:10). Some connect Put with Somaliland, known as Punt (pwn.t). But the identification of Put with Punt is phonetically problematic. Thus the identification with Libya seems to have more support although not by similarity of names.

The last of the four is Canaan, which normally represents the land of Palestine and Phoenicia with its kaleidoscopic mixture of races, a natural result for a country which is the "bridge" of continents. The name Canaan has been connected with various etymologies including the Hurrian *kinahhu*, a reddish-purple shellfish dye. References from antiquity show the name is geographical. Possibly it may have been used of the merchant class in early commercial activities. Exclusive to the Old Testament is the use of the term for inhabitants of the area in a general sense. It later came to mean the pre-Israelite population without distinction of race or social status. These many tribes are in some way related to Canaan, and thus are called Canaanites.

The lines of three of these are now carried further in the expanding list. First are listed five sons of Cush, all of whom show expansion in Arabia. Seba is usually identified with Upper Egypt on the Nile, with the ancient city of Meroe between Berber and Khartoum. Havilah, which means "sand-land," could fit several areas according to its usage: Ishmaelite Arab territory (Gen. 25:18), eastern Arabia on the Persian Gulf (Gen. 10:29), the Ethiopian coast (Gen. 10:7), or even India as an extension of the east (Gen. 2:11). The fact that Havilah is mentioned under both Shem and Ham shows mixing of the races: both Shemites and Hamites lived there.

Sabtah is near the western shore of the Persian Gulf. It has to been identified as Shabwat, ancient Hadhramaut. Raamah appears to have been in southwest Arabia; Sabteca is possibly to be identified with Samudake, east toward the Persian Gulf.

So these five tribal regions in the lower sections of Arabia were populated with descendants from Ham. Of them, Raamah produced two other tribes: Sheba and Dedan. Sheba is the name of the ancient kingdom in southwest Arabia whose metropolis is Marib, forty-five miles east of Sena’a of Yemen. Dedan is associated with modern ’Ula in northern Arabia, an important trading center from antiquity, bordering on Edom (Ezek. 25:13; 27:20). Some of the people of Sheba and Dedan traced their ancestry
back through the Cushite Raamah; others traced their ancestry to Joktan in the line of Shem (10:29).

Inserted in the Table is the story of Nimrod (Gen. 10:8-12). This is the first תָּנַיָּה ("begot") section and forms a major stylistic break from the tribal and territory names preceding it. The verse need not be interpreted to say that Nimrod was the actual son of Cush, but that is possible. Many attempts have been made to identify him, but the most plausible is the reflection of the name in Ninurta, the god of hunting and war.\

Because his name has been connected with the root דָּרָבָּה ("to rebel"), and because of the statements made about him, he seems to represent tyrannical power. Genesis 10:9 describes him as a mighty hunter, a term often used for the hunting of men, and the founder of the colossal powers of the east, which suggests he is not just someone known for his derring-do.

Genesis 10:10 lists these cities as the "beginning" of his kingdom: Babel, Erech, and Accad (and Calneh in the land of Shinar). Since Babel, the well-known city of Babylon, is listed first, it is not surprising to see it as the subject of the next narrative (11:1-9), where it is described as the first gathering point of the race.

Erech is the Akkadian Uruk, to be identified with ancient Warka, the city of heroes like Gilgamesh. It is one hundred miles southeast of Babylon. Accad is another ancient city, the Agade of Sargon, north of Babylon on the Euphrates. It declined sharply in importance about 2000 B.C.

Calneh is nowhere attested in cuneiform. While some have tried to find a city so named in the great Shinar region, many have followed Albright and translated it "and all of them." The second part of the Nimrod digression lists the cities he colonized (Gen. 10:11-12). Nimrod went out to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and Resen. Nineveh is the most famous city of Assyria (just as Babel was for the other region). Rehoboth-Ir could be explaining Nineveh, but probably is the suburb of Rebit Nina. Calah is Kallu, modern Nimrud situated twenty miles south. Resen may be Risnu, between the other cities. It seems that all these cities were close enough together to be one great metropolis.

Nimrod's exploits extended over two geographical areas, Shinar and Assyria, and included seven cities. All these are part of the Hamitic line.
After this תֵּלָה section, another follows: Mizraim developed into tribes. From the Egyptians sprang the Ludim, a group of African tribes west of the Delta; the Anamim, in the vicinity of Cyrene; the Lehabin, the Libyans on the north African shore (Nah. 3:9 and Dan. 11:43); the Naphtuhim, the people of the Delta (Lower Egypt); the Pathrusim, the people of Upper Egypt; the Casluhim, the people who dwelt east of the Delta between Egypt and Canaan; and the Caphtorim, the Cretans.

The clause "from whence come the Philistines" is problematic because of its position in the text. Scripture connects the origin of the Philistines with Caphtor (Amos 9:7; Deut. 2:23; Jer. 47:4), but the Caphtorim, the Cretans, come after this clause. While some have suggested rearranging the clauses, it may not be necessary. The clause in the Table suggests migration and not lineage. Amos has the Philistines from Caphtor in the same sense that Israel was from Egypt--migration and not origination. The difficulty may be solved by looking at their origin and their migration from the Aegean bases through Caphtor into the Delta and finally into Palestine.

But part of the problem is the general assumption that this name is anachronistic since all sources so far attest that the Philistines in the strict sense date from around 1200 B.C. But the Philistines of Genesis are quite different from those of later periods. Grintz concluded that they were different enough to posit successive migrations of different tribes. He concluded there were three migrations: the first was the migration of Pelasgo-Philistine tribes from Casluhim (Genesis and Exodus), the second was the movement of the Philistines from Caphtor to Gaza, and the third was the further movement of the Pelasgo-Philistines in the period of Rameses III. Therefore the tribes from Mizraim are seven, and out of one come the Philistines. If this be so, then the powerful Egyptian influence carried far north into the Aegean.

The final Hamite line to be traced is that of the sons of Canaan (Gen. 10:15-19). This line focuses on the peoples living in the land promised to Israel. In fact, the section closes with the territorial boundaries specifically given.

Once again a תֵּלָה section is inserted to introduce the cities and tribes. The first-begotten is Sidon, the predominant Phoenician city. This suggests that the founder gave his name to the city. Heth, the Hittites in the Old Testament, is problematic here under Canaan. The text is listing a mixed population in Canaan,
and so the term is justified if it describes Hittites who swept south in vast ethnic movements.45

A series of tribes are mentioned beginning with the Jebusites. The Jebusites dwelt in Jebus (Jerusalem) and were part of the early stock of Canaanite tribes. The Amorites pose another problem. The term can refer to a mixed population in the land in general. It does not fit the description of the western Semites whose center was in Mari.46 These are smaller ethnic groups that inhabited the mountains around Jordan.

Very little is known about the Gergashites and the Hivites. They are mentioned only in the cliche lists for Canaanites in Edom, Shechem, and Gibeon.47 Possibly terms like "Hivite" and "Hittite" are used pejoratively and ideologically, but as North says, "we cannot see that all organic link of origin with those foreign populaces is excluded."48

The rest of the list includes the Arkites, those living in Lebanon north of Sidon; the Sinites near 'Arqa; the Arvadites, the most northerly of Phoenician cities north of the river El Kebir; the Zemarites, those living in the town of Sumra (modern) north of 'Arqa; and the Hamathites, the inhabitants of Hamath on the Orontes. Hamath, it may be noted, is the central point of the northern boundary of the land.

It is clear that the writer wished to emphasize the names of the Canaanites who dwelt in the land promised to Israel because he mentions the familiar boundary notices in all directions, from the cities of the plain to Gerar to the northern extremities. Such an emphasis coming after the account of the curse of Canaan and written for a people who were to dispossess these Canaanites would have great impact.

THE SONS OF SHEM (10:21-31)

A new heading lists the relationship of Shem to Japheth (the brother) and Eber (the descendant) -- the former speaking of an alliance based on Genesis 9 and the latter speaking of the connection in the line to the Hebrews.

The first name in the list is Elam. Descendants of Shem early penetrated the highlands east of Babylon even though they were later not the dominant racial or linguistic group.49 Asshur, Shem's second son, is the name for the region and people of Assyria. Arpachshad, the third name, is the ancestor of the Hebrews. Arpachshad's meaning and location have caused considerable speculation, but he can only be generally listed as resid-
ing northeast of Nineveh. Lud is probably the Ludbu of the Assyrians, situated on the Tigris. Aram is the name of the Aramean tribes of antiquity living in the steppes of Mesopotamia. The descendants from Aram--Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash--are not well known. They seem to be located in the north between Armenia and Mesopotamia.

The passage then refers to the developing line from Arpachshad, using the 727 form through Shelah to Eber. One of Eber's sons is Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided (probably referring to the division of nations at Babel). Once the Table mentions Peleg, it traces his line no further. Rather, it lists the many tribes from Joktan, using the 727 formula again.

The first tribe was Almodad, referring to a South Arabian people. The second is Sheleph, another tribe of the southern Arabian peninsula. Hazarmaveth, the third, is identified with the exporter of myrrh known as Hadramaut in Southern Arabia. Jerah and Hadoram are difficult, but are assumed to be in the same vicinity. Uzal is the designation of San'a, the old capital of Yemen. Diklah, the Arabic name for "date-palm," may refer to an oasis. Obal seems to be 'Abil, a term used for several localities in Yemen. Abimael is taken to be a genuine Sabaean formation, with the ma being emphatic ("my father, verily, he is God").

Sheba was also listed under Ham; the name here attests to the fact that Joktanites lived there as well. Ophir and Havilah, also listed under Ham, were southern Arabian territories rich in gold. Jobab is assumed to be identical to Yuhaybib in South Arabia.

These thirteen descendants of Joktan represent settled Arabian tribes in the peninsula. Israel would find ancient blood ties with the Joktanites of the desert of Arabia, as well as her relatives to the east.

The final verse of the chapter forms the colophon-type ending of the Table. All families came from the sons of Noah, but these families listed here have significant developments (727) as far as Israel's interests are concerned.

The Meaning of the Passage

Most commentators observe that the Table demonstrates the unity of the human race. Coming from the sons of Noah, the survivors of the Flood were fruitful and multiplied.
But the passage is far more complex than that. The Table is a select list of names, and that selection must serve a purpose. The names are names of individuals, cities, tribes, and nations arranged according to the genealogical connections of the ancestors or founders. The pattern of the Table is segmented rather than linear; it is designed to show blood ties, treaties, alliances and other connections between existing peoples.

That the promised land is central to the Table can be seen from the arrangement of the descendants. The Japhethites are spread from east to west across the northern frontier; the Hamites surround the land from south to west; and the Shemites are traced from the eastern to the southern borders of the land. Moreover, the preoccupation with the Canaanites in the land of promise shows the concern of the writer to fit the Table to the message of the book: the fulfillment of God's promise to bless Israel as a nation in that land, and to bless those nations that bless her, and curse those who are antagonistic to her.

The Table then deliberately selected these tribes and traced their development. This was done by expanding (in the "be-got" sections) important elements found in the basic genealogy (the "sons of" structure). From the heading ("a genealogy, "particu-

lar") it is clear that the passage was designed to do just this. The purpose of this genealogy in Genesis is to trace what became of Noah's descendants, but the particular items included in this genealogy were selected because of their significance for Israel.

The genealogy of the Noah moves in four directions (in each of the "sections"). Through these four sections the genealogy focuses on the dominant kingdoms of Assyria and Shinar, the powerful Egyptian tribes, the Canaanite tribes in their lands, and the Arabian tribes of the line of Shem. These are peoples with whom the new nation of Israel would have dealings in accord with the oracle of Noah in Genesis 9.

According to Genesis, the new nation of Israel was to be blessed as God's people in the land of Canaan. God's plan to bless Israel involved the movement, displacement, and subjugation of other peoples. The oracle of Noah in Genesis 9 anticipated the blessing for Shem, along with Japheth, and the cursing of Canaan, a son of Ham. This Table in Genesis 10 gives direction to that oracle. It presents the lines of Shem and Japheth as pure tribal groups around the promised land; it also presents the old block of Hamites, especially the mixed races in the land of Canaan, as the predominant powers on the earth. The "sections
identify these tribes for Israel and signify their relationship to the blessing or cursing.

Notes
5 They are listed in Assyrian as Gimirraya, and in Greek as Kimmerioi (Odyssey 11. 14 and Herodotus 1. 15, 103; 4. 1-142). Speiser identifies them with Cymry as in the Welsh (E. A. Speiser, Genesis, The Anchor Bible [Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964], p. 63).
6 Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 1. 122-29. Skinner identified them with barbarians called Ga-ga (John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910], p. 197); Speiser related the name to Gyges of Lydia and Gogaia in the Amarna Letters (Speiser, Genesis, p. 66).
7 They are called Yamanai in Sargon's texts, Ym'n in the fourteenth century Ras Shamra tablets, and Y"u'n-(n) in Egyptian referring to the Sea Peoples. For a discussion of the identification of Javan with the twelve settlements in western Asia Minor, see Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1953), p. 190.
8 Wiseman says they are the same as the Hittite Tipal and Tibar district which Naram Sin traversed around 2200 B.C. (Wiseman, "Genesis 10: Some Archaeological Considerations," p. 18). Herodotus located the region in the north on the shore of the Black Sea (Herodotus 3. 94); Josephus called them Cappadocians (Antiquities of the Jews 1. 122-29).
9 Thucydides 4. 109; Herodotus 1. 57, 59.
10 The connection with the Etruscans, suggested by Dhorne, is supported by Wiseman. It would be comparable to the classical Turansioi.
12 A textual problem makes the identification difficult; 1 Chronicles 1:6 has al' for the "h. Since so little is known of the name, it is impossible to argue the case.
13 Hittite writings of Marsilis II (fourteenth century B. C.) list a district known as Tagarma north of the road from Haran to Carchemish (Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, p. 192).
14 The name is listed on Amarna and Hittite lists. Excavations show these people supplied purple to Tyre before being displaced by the Philistines around 1200 B.C. (Y. Lynn Holmes, "The Location of Alashiya," Journal of the American Oriental Society 91 [1971]:426-29).
History of Phoenician Colonization” Bulletin of the American Schools of 
Oriental Research 83 (1941):14-22. Herodotus had identified it with Spain's 
Tartassos (Herodotus 1. 163; 4. 152; see also Strabo 3. 151).
16 It is still a designation of the Greeks in later literature (1 Mace. 1:1; 8:5; 
Babylonian Talmud Ta'anith 5b).
Odyssey 14. 327; 19. 296; Apollodorus The Library 1. 9, 16).
18 Neiman thinks it is related to the Egyptian term for "Black Land," for that title 
of their land in Bohairic is Khemi; but the Hieroglyphic Egyptian begins with K 
19 T. Save-Soderbergh, "The Nubian Kingdom of the Second Intermediate 
21 The connection between the two is phonetically problematic, not only be 
cause of the "n" in Punt, but also because of the "t" as against the "t" of Punt 
which is only a feminine termination (J. Simons, "The 'Table of Nations' [Gen. 10] 
Its General Structure and Meaning," Oudtestamentische Studien 10 [ 1954]:179)
22 The Greek and Latin versions refer to it as Libya. Josephus says Libya was 
founded by Phoutes (Antiquities of the Jews 1. 132). Jubilees 9:1 takes it as Libya, 
and Libyan mercenaries are well known from extra-biblical literature (but 
Puntians are not) (Simons, "The 'Table of Nations,'" p. 180).
23 John C. L. Gibson, "Observations on Some Important Ethnic Terms in th 
24 B. Maisler, "Canaan and the Canaanites," Bulletin of the American Schools o 
Oriental Research 102 (1946):7-12; E. A. Speiser, "The Name Phoinikes," 
26 The Memphis Stele of Amenophis II mentions 640 Canaanites in a social 
standing (not ethnic); and the Tell El Amarna letters (EA 9, 19) mention ki-na-haa-
27 James A. Montgomery, Arabia and the Bible (New York: KTAV Publishing 
28 Ibid., p. 42.
29 Cassuto, among others, believed that it had first been northern on the 
peninsula, and then moved south around the eighth century B.C. (Cassuto, From 
Noah to Abraham, p. 199).
30 Wiseman, "Genesis 10: Some Archaeological Considerations," p. 17; Bohl 
"Babel and Bibel, " p. 115. Speiser takes him to be Tukulti-Ninurta I, an early ruler 
of Assyria ("In Search of Nimrod," Oriental and Biblical Studies [Philadelphia 
31 The Septuagint renders Ψυξ τησ θυσιων as "the hunting giant," the Arabic as "the 
terrible tyrant," and the Syriac as "the warlike giant." Midrash Rabbah 37:2 says 
he snared people (see also Yoma 10a, and Josephus Antiquities of the Jews 1. 113-14).
32 Wiseman suggests that since Erech is written Uruk or Unuk in Sumerian, it 
might be the city named after Enoch. Enoch's son was Irad, and he may have 
33 J. A. Thompson, "Samaritan Evidence for 'All of them in the land of Shinar 
34 It is possible to translate it "Asshur went out," but it is probably better to take 
it the other way since the story is about Nimrod's exploits, and the preceding was 
only the beginning.
35 Wiseman points out that archaeology shows that the earliest inhabitant
and languages of the region were not Semitic. Before 2600 the civilization is "Sumerian." Moreover there is a direct cultural link between Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt (Wiseman, "Genesis 10: Some Archaeological Considerations," p. 21). 36 Cassuto, From Noah to Abraham, p. 200. Los connects them to Lydian (Asia Minor) mercenaries (F. J. Los, "The Table of Peoples of the Tenth Chapter of Genesis," The Mankind Quarterly 7 [1967]:148).


38 See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, who define it as "southland" and connect it with the Akkadian Paturisi and the Egyptian P-to-rest (A Hebrew and English Lexicon, p. 837). See also "Pathros" in Isaiah 11:11 and Jeremiah 44:1.

39 Leupold thinks they may have come from Crete, earlier than the Philistines, as part of the swarms of nations mixing with Egyptians (H. C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953], p. 370).

40 They are identified with Keftiu ("the region beyond"), referring to the Mediterranean in the Egyptian language (Skinner, Genesis, p. 214).


44 Wiseman points out that the Table must go back before the thirteenth century due to the omission of Tyre (Wiseman, "Genesis 10: Some Archaeological Considerations," p. 21).


47 North said the Hivites must represent the Horites or Hurrian element ("The Hivites," p. 44).

48 Ibid., p. 61.


50 Several have tried to connect Arpachshad with the Kasdim, or Chaldeans (e.g., Los, The Table of Peoples of the Tenth Chapter of Genesis," p. 158).


53 Most take this to be a combination of the article יָקָח plus יִדְיָה ("friend").

54 Silph is a district of Yemen, and Salph a Yemenite tribe (G. R. Driver, "Notes

55 Phillips notes that even today tribesmen of Hadramaut proudly state they are descendants of Joktan, supposed by them to be Qahtan, great-great-great-grandson of Shem, son of Noah, and legendary ancestor of all South Arabians (Phillips, *Qataban and Sheba*, pp. 28-29).

56 Gus W. Van Beck, "Prolegomenon," in Montgomery, *Arabia and the Bible*, pp xiii-xv. He suggests that there were commercial and ethnic affinities across the sea, the African Saba owing allegiance to the Arabian.

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Blessing In the Old Testament:
A Study of Genesis 12:3
Paul Rotenberry

The Problem Stated
Since the appearance of the RSV of the OT, there has been much discussion of the section dealing with the blessing of Abraham, Gen. 12:1-3. The Hebrew text is rendered by the ASV: "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The RSV renders the same text: "and by you all the families of the earth will bless themselves." Many seem to fear that the rendering of the RSV destroys the messianic idea in the verse, and so they oppose the rendering.

Interpreting the Verse

Messianic. According to the messianic interpretation of the verse, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed . . . (ASV)" is understood to refer to the blessing received through Jesus the Messiah who came of the seed of Abraham, so that truly all families of the earth were blessed through Abraham. The new translation is just as susceptible of a messianic interpretation as the older translation, though with reflexive action. "By you all the families of the earth will bless themselves . . . (RSV) " is thus understood to mean that in the Messiah of the seed of Abraham, all the families of the earth would avail themselves of the blessings. Thus far, the new translation has really lost nothing of the reference to Christ seen in the verse by Christians from the early days of the church.

Non-messianic. The non-messianic interpretation of both translations would see in the verse only that the name of Abraham (or his descendants, Gen. 22:18) would be used in pronouncing a blessing. Notice the usage in Gen. 48:20 with the same Hebrew preposition "by thee" or "in thee" taken as instrumental. ASV "In thee will Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh." RSV "by you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh . . ." In this sense, Gen. 12:3 would be understood to mean that when one "blessed himself" "in" or "by" Abraham, he would simply say, "God make me as Abraham" or one would be blessed by having someone say, "God make me as Abraham." The force of the words and the context of Gen. 12:3 alone would not determine the interpretation. Both are equally possible in the context.

The Early Christian Interpretation-Messianic
In the early church the messianic interpretation was given by inspired men, thus Peter (Acts 3:25f) and Paul (Gal. 3:8). This we accept without question. But this acceptance does not depend upon the passive translation of Gen. 12:3. The messianic idea is just as
clear whether the Hebrew be taken as reflexive or as passive: whether it be read "And . . . shall bless themselves . . ." or "and . . . shall be blessed . . ."

Some may wonder how one could accept the messianic interpretation of the New Testament quotations and yet admit the possibility of the difference of translation. Why did the RSV translators use the expression "bless themselves" in Gen. 12:3 and the expression "be blessed" in the NT quotations of this verse, whereas the word occurring in the Greek NT is the same form of the same word that occurs in the Greek translation (Septuagint) of Gen. 12:3? The solution to this problem is found in the text with which the translators worked in each instance. In the NT they worked with the Greek NT text; in the OT they worked with the Hebrew text, and presumably our Hebrew text of Gen. 12:3 is the same as that used by the translators who produced the Septuagint.

One may well doubt that the grammatical construction of a translation is to be regarded as inspired merely because it is quoted in the New Testament when the writer or speaker is simply giving the Septuagint rendering.¹ Now, if one should choose to make this an argument that God inspired the translation of the Niphal form as passive, the discussion must end there, for we accept Peter and Paul as inspired men. (However, one is then faced with more serious problems of text and canon, if this is taken as putting a divine seal on all selections of words, texts, and constructions in the Septuagint translation.) If, on the other hand, one understands that Peter and Paul were simply quoting the translation commonly used by their hearers and readers, then we may investigate the disposition of the Niphal form made by the Septuagint translators.²

The Hebrew Verb, Niphal Conjugation

In the Hebrew language, verbs are used in different forms to express person, number, voice, mode, tense, and extension of the root idea. The extension of the root idea of a verb is expressed by conju-

¹ Editor's Note: Compare, for example, McGarvey's comment on Acts 7:14 where he explains the apparent contradiction between the figures 70 and 75 there and in Gen. 46:27 by saying that the difference is a difference between the Hebrew text of Gen. 46:27 and the Septuagint which Stephen was quoting and which was known by his hearers. New Commentary on Acts of Apostles, p. 120.

² The translation of T. J. Meek in The Bible, An American Translation, published by the University of Chicago Press, represents the Niphal of Gen. 12:3 as reciprocal: "... through you shall all the families of the earth invoke blessings on one another." This is a force perfectly proper to the Niphal conjugation, but it is a highly specialized force. This translation would limit the meaning of the passage to the use of the name of Abraham in pronouncing blessings and would, in the judgment of this writer, unduly restrict the action of the verb. New Testament usage of this verse could not be justified if the force of the Niphal in Gen. 12:3 be understood as reciprocal.
gations; thus, the Qal conjugation is the simple active or stative
form, the Niphal is the reflexive or passive of the simple active,
the Piel is factitive or intensive or denominative, the Pual is passive
of the Piel, the Hiphil is causative, the Hophal is passive of the
Hiphil, and the Hithpael is reflexive. These are the basic meanings
of the conjugations. With reference to the word "b-r-k" (translated
"bless"), the problem of translation in the RSV centers in the Niphal
conjugation which form occurs in Gen. 12:3. The earliest force
of the Niphal conjugation in Hebrew was reflexive. Though in later
Hebrew the Niphal came to be used more as a passive of Qal, the
reflexive force was still common. Thus, Gen. 12:3 would in its ear-
iest force be rendered "and they shall bless themselves" (the perfect
tense occurring here with waw consecutive). But with many Hebrew
verbs, the Niphal is used to express the passive voice only; and in
many other verbs, the Niphal is used to express both passive and re-
flexive voices. So the use of the conjugation alone is not decisive. The
Septuagint gives no help in this consideration for a Niphal is translated
into Greek middle or passive voice as the translator understood the usage
in the particular context. In the present and imperfect tenses of the
indicative mode in Greek, the middle and passive voices are not dis-
tinguished in form, whereas the future middle is in a different verb system
from the future passive. In Gen. 12:3, there is no possible confusion as to how
the translator understood the Niphal. The Greek translated clearly the Niphal
as future passive, which translation was cited by Peter and Paul in the NT.

The Niphal form of the verb b-r-k occurs only three times in the
OT: Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 28:14. The Niphal is used often as a re-
flexive or passive of the Qal conjugation; however, the Qal (with
the exception of the passive participle) occurs only twice in the OT
and has the meaning "bend the knee" or "kneel" (2 Chron. 6:13; Psa.
95:6). The Qal passive participle does occur c. 72 times with the
meaning "be praised" or "be blessed." The Piel form is the regular
active form used in the sense "to bless"; the Pual form occurs as the
passive of Piel "to be blessed." The Hiphil is the causative form of
the root idea, "to cause to kneel" or "to cause to bend the knee." The
Hithpael is properly reflexive "to bless oneself," but may bear the
passive force "to be blessed." The Hithpael occurs only six times
in the OT; in each passage, the RSV translates as a reflexive where-
as the ASV translates three occurrences as passive (Gen. 22:18; 26:4;
Psa. 72:17) and three occurrences as reflexive (Deut. 29:19; Isa.
65:16; Jer. 4:2). It should be noted that in each instance in which
the text of the ASV translates the Hithpael as passive, the marginal
reading is reflexive: "bless oneself." Also, one should note that
the marginal reading of the RSV of Gen. 22:18 is passive: "be blessed."

The root idea of the verb b-r-k is "bend the knee," and the root
is found throughout the Semitic family of languages with this mean-
ing. In Hebrew, the Piel conjugation became specialized in the usage
"to bless." The Niphal and Hithpael conjugations are associated in meaning with the Piel; and the Qal passive participle is associated with the Piel and not at all with the active voice of the Qal. There are other Hebrew verbs in which this phenomenon is found, e.g. b-s-r "cut off." The Piel and Qal passive participle signify "fortify," the Niphal means "be restrained," the Qal active means "cut off."

Of course, the Piel meaning is an extension of the root idea. (cf. also the root n-t-q). Furthermore, the root b-s-r also presents the Niphal in closer relationship (reflexive or passive) with the Piel than with the Qal. This shows a usage similar to that noted in the verb b-r-k. Thus, the Niphal on perfectly good linguistic grounds may rather be taken as a reflexive or passive of Piel than of Qal. That the Niphal need not be understood as passive can be readily seen in the verb d-b-r "speak" in which the Qal is active, the Niphal is middle-active, the Piel is active, and the Pual is passive.

**B-R-K; Bless**

The root meaning of the Hebrew verb b-r-k as already noticed is "bend the knee." As this was done in worship, it acquired the meaning "praise" or "bless" (give adoration to the deity). Since a "blessing" was spoken, the Greek translators uniformly render the verb by "eulogeo" with the force "praise" or "bless" (lit., to "speak well of," or to "speak good things"). The blessing to the Hebrew mind, however, does not correspond exactly to the English word "bless" as shown in that 's-r (lit., "go straight") "to be happy" is translated in Psa. 1:1 "Blessed is the man . . ." Even the English word "bless" has acquired many connotations far removed from the root idea "to consecrate with blood." In the Hebrew idea of blessing, there was always the "pronouncement" of blessing. The blessing was "something said." The word (blessing) spoken then began its work to effect that which was desired; thus, "God blessed them (sea creatures), saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas . . ." (Gen. 1:22). The "blessing" was what God "said," then the word of God produced its effect. (This shows also something of the meaning of the curse by Jehovah in Zech. 3:2.) We may see further this idea of blessing in Gen. 48:20 as Jacob says concerning Ephraim and Manasseh, "In thee will Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh . . ." Here again, the blessing was something spoken, and the spoken word was to effect that which was desired. We may work our way in each occurrence of the word throughout the entire Bible with this idea. There was something of the force of the whole personality involved in the blessing, and once given, it could not be recalled. So Isaac, having blessed Jacob, cannot recall the blessing and can give only a lesser blessing to Esau (Gen. 27:18-40; esp. vv. 37-40). A modern scholar expressed the idea quite well: "In the Bible blessing means primarily
the active outgoing of the divine goodwill or grace which results in prosperity and happiness amongst men." 3 Another said that ultimately all blessing must spring from God. 4 For those to whom the work is available, the psychological interpretation of the blessing from the Hebrew viewpoint is well expressed by Johs. Pedersen. 5

**Conclusion**

It appears more likely, therefore, that Gen. 12:3 has immediate reference to the use of Abraham's name in pronouncing blessings, but that this interpretation must include a tacit recognition that through this Hero of Faith the Messiah also would come to pronounce new blessings of His own upon His people, Acts 3:25f; Gal. 3:8.

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**Abbreviations**

- RSV - Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible
- ASV - American Standard Version of the Holy Bible
- OT - Old Testament
- NT - New Testament


4 *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, G. Kittel, Zweiter Band, ss. 751-763.


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EXEGETICAL NOTES

GENESIS 1:1-2:4a

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Introduction

These Exegetical Notes do not aim at a detailed verse-by-verse explanation. Their purpose rather is to look at the first chapter of Genesis from a wider perspective the perspective of the whole of the Pentateuch. A secondary purpose of these Notes is to explore in a general way the broader question of the meaning of biblical narrative texts. How do we go about finding what the biblical writers were teaching in their carefully wrought narratives? In light of this second purpose, the Notes will be presented in the form of a general description of biblical narrative and the comments on Gen 1:1-2:4a will serve as examples. It will be assumed that what is said may be applied generally to all biblical narratives in the same way that it is here applied to Genesis one.

Historical narrative is the re-presentation of past events for the purpose of instruction. Two dimensions are always at work in shaping such narrative: 1) the course of the historical event itself and 2) the viewpoint of the author who recounts the event. This dual aspect of historical narrative means that one must not only look at the course of the event in its historical setting but one must also look for the purpose and intention of the author in recounting the event.

The ideas of looking beyond the historical event to the author's version of it does not imply that the author's version is different than the event as it actually happened. Rather, in historical narrative what is given is the inspired author's evaluation of the meaning and significance of the event. In historical narrative we may be told less than all that happened; but we are also told much more than simply that the event happened—although we are always being told at least that. We are also being told the purpose and significance of the event within the broader context of God's revelation in his word.

In what follows, we will outline briefly some general principles on how to go about the task of finding the author's intent and purpose in recounting the events in historical narrative.
Assessing the Structure of the Narrative Account

The most influential yet subtle feature of an author's work in relating historical events is the overall framework within which he arranges his account. Some would call this the literary context. Perhaps a more usable term would be the structure of the passage. What this means is that there is always an internal relationship of each segment of a narrative to the other segments of the narrative and to the narrative viewed as a whole. When we speak of structure, then, we are speaking of "the total set of relationships within a given narrative unit."

General structural elements to look for in every historical narrative are simple, but nonetheless important. They include an introduction, a conclusion, sequence, disjuncture, repetition, deletion, description and dialogue. These elements combine to form the building blocks or segments of the larger narrative units.

For example, Gen 1:1-2:4a is clearly recognizable as a unit of historical narrative. It has an introduction (1:1), a body (1:2-2:3) and a conclusion (2:4a). With these three segments a unit is formed. Within this unit several structural elements combine to tie this passage (Gen 1:1-2:4a) together and give it a specific meaning. One of the more obvious elements is the repetition of the phrase "evening and morning" which divides the passage into a 7-day scheme. Creation forms a period of one work week concluding with a rest day. Already in this simple structural framework there is the tilting of the account that betrays the interests of the author: creation is viewed in terms of man's own work week.

Another, more subtle, structural element tying the passage together is the tight sentence pattern (or sequence) within which the events of creation are recorded. This is apparent in the almost monotonous string of "ands" in the English Versions of chapter one. In contrast to this smooth sequence, however, there is an abrupt disjuncture at 1:2, in effect, shoving this verse outside the regular sequence of the chapter. A study of the author's style in Genesis shows that when he wants to begin a specific topic much narrower than the preceding subject matter, he uses such a technique of disjuncture (see Gen 3:1). Here, then, at the beginning of the account the structure reveals the aim of the author: to narrow the scope of his narrative from the universe (1:1) to that of the land (1:2ff.). This is quite a remarkable turning point in the account of creation and should not be overlooked by anyone attempting to follow the author's intent in this chapter.

Structure, then, implies purpose and that in turn suggests a central concern or integration point which gives a passage its meaning and direction. In the two examples just cited, the central concern of Gen 1 focuses on man and the land. Certainly we need more than these two examples to be convinced that this is the central concern, but the cumulative effect of further observations confirms that this is the direction or purpose behind the framework of the account.

When we have observed the internal structure of a passage, as we have briefly done with Gen 1:1-2:4a, we have not completed the task of assessing the total structural relationship of the passage to the broader
context within which it is found. There may indeed be a whole series of further structural ties between the passage and its literary environment. Here we are faced with the problem of where to fix the outside limits to a passage within an historical narrative. It is very often the case in the Old Testament narrative sections that the division of the narrative into "books" cuts across very tightly constructed units (e.g. Gen 1-Exod 1:7 is a structurally complete unit not recognized by those who divided the Pentateuch into five parts). Beyond these literary units there lie, as well, the larger borders of the Old Testament canon and the subsequent canon of the Old and New Testaments. These borders must be respected as well if we desire to go beyond exegesis to biblical theology.

In working with Gen 1:1-2:4a, we can safely set our perimeters around the Pentateuch (Gen--Deut) as the largest meaningful unit (literarily). Since it comes first, it also seems safe to say that Gen 1:1-2:4a is to be considered an introduction to the Pentateuch. Once the largest unit of historical narrative has been drawn, a two-fold task remains: 1) to determine the central concern of this unit and 2) to develop the contribution of the smaller unit (Gen 1:1-2:4a) to the concern of the whole.

The central concern of the large narrative unit is not always immediately apparent but usually becomes clearer with a trial and error effort to relate the parts to the whole. This amounts, in practice, to reading through the entire unit and formulating a general statement of the overall theme. This theme is then checked against further readings of the text. Each reading should produce a clearer idea of the whole, which in turn should cast more light on the parts or segments.

Since we have drawn the Pentateuch as the largest unit with a meaningful structural relationship to Gen 1:1-2:4a, the question we should now ask is whether there is a center to the Pentateuch. From our study we would suggest that the central concern of the Pentateuch should be described in the following way.

First, it should be pointed out that the most prominent event and the most far-reaching theme in the Pentateuch, viewed entirely 'on its own, is the covenant between Yahweh and Israel established at Mount Sinai. The meaning of this event as it is described in the Pentateuch can be summarized in the following cluster of themes:

1) God comes to dwell with Israel
2) Israel is a chosen people
3) God gives Israel the land
4) Israel must obey God's will
5) Salvation or judgment is contingent on Israel's obedience

If we leave these ideas in their original dress, we find that they are clothed in the metaphor of the ancient Near Eastern monarch: God, the Great King, grants to his obedient vassal-prince the right to dwell in his land and promises protection from their enemies. Somewhat more generally, this cluster of ideas goes by the name theocracy or the kingdom of God. However we may state it, this rule of God among his people Israel is the central concern of the Pentateuch.
There is, however, more to be said about the intention of the author of the Pentateuch. We need to say, secondly, something about what the author of the Pentateuch is telling his readers **about** the covenant at Sinai. This can be summarized in the following three points:

1) The author of the Pentateuch wants to draw a connecting link between God's original plan of blessing for mankind and his establishment of the covenant with Israel at Sinai. Put simply, the author sees the covenant at Sinai as God's plan to restore his blessing to mankind through the descendants of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 2:24).

2) The author of the Pentateuch wants to show that the Covenant at Sinai failed to restore God's blessing to mankind because Israel failed to trust God and obey his will.

3) The author of the Pentateuch wants to show that God's promise to restore the blessing would ultimately succeed because God himself would one day give to Israel a heart to trust and obey God (Deut 30:1-10).

The outlook of the Pentateuch, then, might be described as "eschatological," in that it looks to the future as the time when God's faithful promise (blessing) will be fulfilled. The past, Mount Sinai, has ended in failure from the author's (Moses') perspective. The message of the Pentateuch, however, is **hope**: God's people should trust and obey God and, like Abraham, have faith in his promises.

The primary **subject matter** of the Pentateuch, then, is the Sinai Covenant. The author sees God's election of Israel and the establishment of a covenant at Sinai as a central religious and theological problem. The Pentateuch is his answer to the problem raised by the covenant in the same way that Gal is the Apostle Paul's answer to the same problem. It is his explanation of the place Sinai occupies in God's plan and his explication of the lessons to be drawn from the experience.

It is of great importance to see that while the Pentateuch is **about the Sinai Covenant**, it **is not the document of that covenant**. The Pentateuch contains documents of the Sinai Covenant, e.g., the ten commandments, the covenant code, tabernacle instruction and laws of sacrifice, but the Pentateuch, as a literary document, is fundamentally different from a document of the Sinai covenant. What this means is that the Pentateuch is a document that looks at the Sinai covenant as an **object under investigation**. It is attempting to evaluate the Sinai covenant from a perspective that is not the same as that of the covenant itself. Like the other historical books of the Old Testament, the Prophets and the New Testament, the Pentateuch represents a look back at the failure of Sinai and a look forward to a time of fulfillment (Deut 30).

It now remains to develop the contribution of the smaller narrative unit (Gen 1:1-2:4a) to the central concern of the whole (Pentateuch). In other words, if we are right in saying Genesis 1 is an introduction to the Pentateuch, then we should ask what it introduces about the central concern of the Pentateuch: the covenant at Sinai.

The following principles are intended to show how a segment of historical narrative can contribute to the central concern of the larger narrative of which it is a part.
The Principle of Selectivity

No historical narrative is a complete account of all that occurred in a given event or series of events. The author must select those events that most effectively relate not only what happened but also the meaning and significance of what happened.

We can formulate a working description of this principle of selection in this way: The author selects and arranges those features of an historical event that most characteristically portray the meaning of the event as conceived by the author.

A close study of Gen 1:1-2:4a shows that a careful and purposeful selection has been made in the composition of the creation account and that the features selected do, in fact, provide an introduction to the Sinai covenant—that is, the creation account tells the reader information that makes the author's view of the Sinai covenant understandable.

One way to ferret out this selection is to ask: What general features of creation (the subject matter) would I expect to find in Gen 1:1-2:4a, but which I don't find? Where, for example, is the account of the creation of the angels? Where, for that matter, is the account of the creation of the stars and the galaxies? Certainly the creation of these bodies is stated as a brute fact in v 1 and is editorially alluded to in v 16; but relative to the detail of the rest of the account in chap. 1, we could almost say the author has passed them by. He has chosen rather to concentrate on the creation and preparation of the land. If we judge from the topics selected in Gen 1:1-2:4a, we can say the author has only three preferred subjects in his account of creation: God, man and the land.

Having said there is little mention of the creation of the rest of the universe, we should note that the creation of the sun and moon is given considerable attention. But we should be quick to note, as well, that neither of these celestial bodies is mentioned in its own right. Rather, their creation is recounted in terms of the role they play in the affairs of men on the land: "to divide the day and night and be for signs for the seasons and for days and years." (1:14ff.).

At this point we need to show how the two principles of Structure and selectivity work together to give a narrative passage its meaning.

First, we have already noted that an internal structural element has defined the scope of the Gen 1:1-2:4a creation account. That is, the disjuncture at v 2 is employed by the author to focus his creation account upon the land. This is consistent with what our analysis of the selection showed: one of the author's three preferential topics is the land.

Now we can turn to the external structural relationship of Gen 1:1-2:4a to the Pentateuch and ask: What does the land as a subject have to do with the Sinai covenant? Or, more precisely stated: How does what Gen 1:1-2:4a records about the land serve as an introduction to the author's view of the covenant at Sinai? When Gen 1:1-2:4a speaks of God's creation and preparation of the land we are, in fact, introduced to one of the central elements of the Sinai Covenant: the promise of God to give the land to Israel: "If you harken to my voice..."
and keep my covenant you will be to me a prize possession among all the nations because all the land is mine" (Exod 19:5; cf. Jer 27:5). What, then, does Gen 1:1-2:4a tell us about the land? It tells us that God is its owner. He created it and prepared it, and he can give it to whomever he chooses (Jer 27:5). In the ancient world, and our own, the right to own land and grant it to others formed the basis of an ordered society. The author of the Pentateuch, then, is quick to point out that the promise of the land to Israel, made effective in the Sinai covenant, was in every way a right justly belonging to God.

Another example of the interrelationship between structure and selection can be seen in the view of God in Gen 1:1-2:4a. When viewed as an introduction (structure) to the covenant at Sinai, we can see that Gen 1 presents a very important view of the covenant God: he is the Creator of the universe (Gen 1:1). Because Israel had come to know God through the covenant in a close and personal way, a certain theological pressure existed which, if left unchecked could, and at times did, erode a proper view of God. This pressure was the tendency to localize and nationalize God as the God of Israel alone (Mic 3:11)--a God who exists solely for Israel and for their blessing. Over against this lesser view of God, however, stands the message of Gen 1 with its clear introduction to the God who created the universe and who has blessed all mankind. From the point of view of the author of the Pentateuch, the God of the Covenant is the Creator of the universe; and he has a plan of blessing for all men. Here lies the theological foundation of all subsequent missionary statements in the Bible.

We can conclude this section with a summary of Gen 1:1-2:4a. The author of the Pentateuch 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, man, and has a plan of blessing for all his creatures.

The Discourse Principles of Theme and Rheme

An historical narrative is a form of discourse between the author and his audience. The author must always write with his audience in view and he must assume certain common knowledge and shared experiences with this audience. On its most basic level this means that the author has to use a language that his audience will understand. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew not simply because that was the writer's language but more importantly because that was the language of those to whom the books were written.

At a level of interpretation, however, this idea of an audience means the author can and must assume that he can use certain terms which are already known on the basis of his common experience with his audience. It also means, in the case of literature, that the author can use terms which will take on specific sense in the course of the literary work itself. We should expect, then, to come across two different kinds of terms in any given narrative unit: those terms which the author assumes his reader will already know or will subsequently come to more fully understand in the work itself (theme) and those terms which the author must elaborate himself in the passage at hand (rheme).
Since the author will develop the meaning of rheme terms in the passage at hand, there is little difficulty in dealing with them in narrative. All that is really necessary is a sensitivity to the author's help in developing the meaning of these terms for his reader.

When the author assumes that his readers already have an understanding of a term he uses (theme) the question at once faces the modern reader: Where does one look for the meaning of a term that is not explained by the ancient writer? We may have to go outside the text altogether for a general understanding of the term and then attempt to fit this within the specific text at hand. Usually, however, there is a safer approach.

As a working guide we might suggest that in searching for the meaning of a term not explained in a given passage (theme), we follow the external structural relationships back to a passage where the term in question is in fact developed (if such a passage does exist). An example from Gen 1:1-2:4a may help to clarify this point.

The author of Gen. 1:1-2:4a uses several terms with the full expectation that his audience will comprehend them without explanation: "the deep," "the expanse," tohu wahohu ("formless and void"), "signs," "seasons," "the great sea monsters," and so on. How do we find the meaning intended by the author for these terms? If we follow the structural ties already delineated above, being careful to remain within the boundaries of the Pentateuch (structure), the meaning of these terms, as used by the author, is close at hand.

The term "signs," for example, calls to mind many things to a modern reader; most recently, to many, the terms may recall the signs of the zodiac. Could this have been the meaning intended by the author when he recounted that the sun and moon are put in the heavens as "signs"? If we look at the use of this term in the broader structural context (Pentateuch), we can readily see that such a meaning would have been completely inappropriate to the author and his original audience. The term "signs" has been given special attention by the author elsewhere in the Pentateuch. For example, the so-called "plagues" of Egypt are, in fact, called "signs" by the author of the Pentateuch (e.g., Deut 29:2-3). The meaning given this term in the Exod account (here the term is rheme, not theme) is that the acts of God in the bringing of disorder upon the Egyptians were "signs" that God was more powerful and majestic than the Egyptians' gods. This sense of the term "signs" fits well in Gen 1:14. The author says that not only are the sun and moon to give light upon the land but they are to be visual reminders of the power and majesty of God. They are "signs" of who the God of the covenant is. They are "telling of the glory of God," as the psalmist puts it (Ps 19:1). Not only does the term "signs" serve as a reminder of the greatness and glory of God for the author of the Pentateuch, "signs" are also a frequent reminder in the Pentateuch of his grace and mercy (Gen 4, 9, 17).

Another example of a theme term in Gen 1:1-2:4a is the term "seasons." Here our English word "season" suggests something like "winter, fall, etc.," but again, the broader context of the Pentateuch gives a
In Gen 1:1--2:4a there is also the development of new terms (rheme) in the narrative. In fact, the concept of man's creation in the "image" of God finds its only explanation in this narrative. The explanation of the term comes from the way in which the author selects two features in man's creation: the deliberation of God before creating man and God's blessing of man after his creation. Both features have an important bearing on the author's view of the Sinai covenant.

First, God's deliberation shows that he has decided to create man differently from any of the other creatures--in his image and likeness. God and man share a likeness that is not shared by other creatures. This apparently means that a relationship of close fellowship can exist between God and man that is unlike the relationship of God with the rest of his creation. What more important fact about God and man would be necessary if the covenant at Sinai were, in fact, to be a real relationship? Remove this and the covenant is unthinkable.

Secondly, in Gen 1, man, the image bearer, is the object of God's blessing. According to the account of creation in Gen 1, the chief purpose of God in creating man is to bless him. The impact of this point on the remainder of the Pentateuch and the author's view of Sinai is clear: through Abraham, Israel and the covenant this blessing is to be restored to all mankind.

The Principle of Contemporization

Often in the writing of historical narrative, events of the past find new meaning and significance in relation to certain issues and ideas present in the author's own day. Thus the author views past events with a certain eye to the present, and he would assume his narrative would be read in that way. From this fact a principle emerges: look for thematic development of ideas and issues current during the author's own time. This presupposes that we have some indication of when the narrative was written and that we know something of the historical-cultural setting of the narrative's composition. If we do not know when or to whom a book is written, it may mean that the book has been intentionally generalized as well as contemporized so that it may speak to many succeeding audiences in many different contexts.

This principle can be detected in Gen 1 by the way in which the author of the Pentateuch uses terms in unusual contexts. For example,
he calls the global ocean (the "deep") in 1:2 a "desert." This is not apparent in the English translation "formless," but the NASB notes it in the margin as a "wasteland." If we again use the notion of theme terms and search for the meaning of this word within the Pentateuch itself, we can see its typological significance. Moses uses this term (Deut 32:10) to describe the desert wasteland where Israel wandered for forty years. Why call an ocean a desert? What better way to teach the people that the God who will lead them out of the wilderness and give them the promised land is the same God who once prepared the land for them by dividing the waters and producing the "dry land"? The God of the Pentateuch is One who leads his people from the wasteland to the promised land.

Summary

We close with one further example of the role of structure and selection in determining the meaning of a unit of historical narrative like Gen 1:1-2:4a. This example should serve also as a summary of the approach taken in this paper.

We have already seen that the overall purpose of the author of the Pentateuch seems to be to show that the Sinai covenant failed for lack of an obedient heart on the part of God's people Israel. We have also seen that his intention in writing the Pentateuch is not to look back in despair at the failure of man but to point in hope to the faithfulness of God. The hope of the writer of the Pentateuch is clearly focused on what God will do to bring his covenant promises to fulfillment. Nowhere is he more clear on this than at the (structural) conclusion to his work: Deut 30:1-10, where Moses tells the people of Israel that they will fail and that they will be cursed, but God's work with them will not end there. The Lord will again bring them into the land, gathering them from all the lands where they have been exiled. But this time, things will be different. Israel is going to obey God. God is going to give them a heart that will obey, a heart that will love the Lord and keep his commandments. It is on this high note that the Pentateuch finally draws to a close.

If we go beyond the Pentateuch to the other historical books, the Prophets and finally to the New Testament, the fulfillment of Moses' hope is made certain. It is also clear in these later books how God is going to give his people a new heart: "I will give you a new heart, a new Spirit I will put within you; I will turn away the heart of stone from your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. My Spirit I will put within you and I will make you walk in my statutes and my judgments you will keep" (Ezek 36:26, 27). It is by means of God's Spirit that his people are able to do his will. No one is clearer on this point than the apostle Paul (Rom 8:4). What is often overlooked, however, is that we needn't go beyond the Pentateuch itself for exactly the same conclusion. The author of the Pentateuch has as one of his central purposes to show that God's work must always be done in God's way: by means of the Spirit of God. To show the centrality of this idea in the Pentateuch we need only compare the author's description of God's own
carrying out of his will (Gen 1:2b) with that of man's obedience to God's will (Exod 31:1-5).

Viewed on its own, the description of the Spirit of God in Gen 1:2 has often been only remotely related to the rest of the chapter. Some interpreters have even chosen to eliminate this reference to God's Spirit altogether and render the passage simply as "a mighty wind was blowing over the surface of the waters." When viewed as structurally related to Exod 31, however, this brief notice regarding the Spirit of God takes on a whole new importance for the meaning of the Pentateuch.

In Exod 31:1-5, God has chosen Bezalel to do the work of building the tabernacle. What God has commanded Moses, Bezalel is to perform. In order to insure his accomplishment of the work, the author of the Pentateuch tells us, the Lord filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God "to do all of the work . . . which I have commanded you." For the author of the Pentateuch, to do the work of God successfully (with wisdom), one must be filled with the Spirit of God. We may recall what Moses says to Joshua when he complains that someone "unofficial" may have received the Spirit of the Lord: "Would that the Lord would put his Spirit upon all of them [his people]" (Nurn 11:29).

If this is one point that the author of the Pentateuch is intending to make throughout this major biblical book, then his comment at the beginning (Gen 1:2b) makes perfectly good sense. Even God the Creator, when he does his work of creating, does so by means of the Spirit of God. How much more then should his people do his will by means of his Spirit.

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THE DATE OF THE TOWER OF BABEL
AND SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

PAUL H. SEELY

If we assume that the story in Gen 11:1-9 is accurately describing an actual historical event, that the account is what we might call "VCR history," the narrative gives us five facts which enable us to date the event. One, the event took place in Shinar, at Babylon in particular (vv. 2, 9). Two, the event involved the building of a city with a tower (vv. 4, 5). Three, the tower was constructed of baked brick (v. 3). Four, the mortar used was asphalt (v. 3). Five, the tower was very probably a ziggurat (v. 4; see discussion below).

When we employ these five facts to date the building of the tower of Babel, we discover from archaeological data that the event occurs too late in history to be the origin of all languages on earth. Scientifically enlightened concordism has attempted to solve this problem through a reinterpretation of the biblical data, and creation science through a reinterpretation of the scientific data; but, these reinterpretations are merely plausible and are able to endure only by setting aside the weighty evidence which supports consensual scholarship. A better solution can be derived from Calvin's understanding of divine accommodation.

1. The Location of Shinar and Its Relevance for Dating the Tower of Babel

Although there is a question whether or not the word Shinar is related to the word Sumer, there is no question that the land of Shinar is distinguished from the land of Assyria, that is, northern Mesopotamia (Isa 11:11). Further, it is evident that the land of Shinar covers the southern half of Mesopotamia (Gen 10:10). The land of Shinar is the land between the Tigris and the Euphrates that lies south of modern Baghdad.

Archaeological excavations in the land of Shinar indicate that although prior to the sixth millennium B.C. there may have been small villages equivalent to those of modern-day Marsh Arabs in the southernmost reaches of the land, Shinar was fundamentally uninhabited before about 6000 B.C. In the southern

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area of Shinar, the cities of Ur, Eridu, and Oueili "seem to be uninhabited before about 5600 to 5000 B.C.\textsuperscript{4}

In the northern part of the land of Shinar, which is more relevant to our study because Babylon is located there,\textsuperscript{5} the cities seem to have been founded later than those in the southern part.\textsuperscript{6} Ras al-Amiya, c. 12 miles northeast of Babylon, dates from c. 4750 B.C.\textsuperscript{7} Tell Uqair, about 25 miles from Babylon, rests on virgin soil carbon-dated to about 4500.\textsuperscript{8} At Jemdet Nasr, about 25 miles northeast of Babylon, occupation begins around 4000 B.C.\textsuperscript{9} Kish, c. 9 miles east of Babylon, also has no remains earlier than 4000 B.C. The lowest levels of Babylon lie below the water table, but its origins have been variously estimated as being from 4000 to 3000 B.C.

For reasons we will discuss below, it is doubtful that any archaeologist would date the tower of Babel before c. 3500 B.C.; but since northern Shinar, where Babel is located, was not settled before c. 5000 B.C., one certainly cannot push the events of Gen 11:1-9 back into history earlier than that if one takes the mention of the land of Shinar and of the city of Babylon seriously

II. Urbanism and Monumental Architecture Date the Tower

Prior to c. 3500 B.C., before the end of the Ubaid culture and the beginning of the Uruk culture, the "cities" in Mesopotamia were just scattered settlements with no monumental architecture. In a few places there is development toward urbanism in the fifth millennium, but the clear rise of urban civilizations with monumental buildings occurs c. 3500 B.C.\textsuperscript{10}

The tenor of the story in Gen 11:1 with its social determination to make a name, its strong desire for security, its building of a city, its use of baked bricks,\textsuperscript{11} and especially its building of a ziggurat (discussed in more depth below) all point to urbanism with monumental architecture as opposed to a mere settlement. This suggests that these events do not significantly antedate 3500 B.C.


\textsuperscript{5} The word Babel is used nearly 300 times in the OT and usually refers to the city of Babylon, although the country of Babylonia is sometimes the referent. In Gen 11:8, 9 it is clearly identified as a city (in the land of Shinar); and there is no archaeological doubt about the location of this city.

\textsuperscript{6} Marc Van De Mieroop, The Ancient Mesopotamian City (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29.

\textsuperscript{7} David Stronach, "Excavations at Ras al Amiya," Iraq 23 (1961): 121.


\textsuperscript{9} R. J. Matthews, "Jemdet Nasr," OEANE 3:212.


III. The Use of Baked Brick with Bitumen for Mortar Dates the Tower of Babel

We can derive a more sure indication of the earliest date for the building of the tower of Babel from the fact that the builders used baked bricks extensively (v. 3 almost implies exclusively) as a building material. Baked bricks were very expensive in Mesopotamia because fuel was so scarce, and their use shows how committed the builders were to making a luxurious and impressive building. This points to the age of urbanism; but the testimony of the baked bricks is even more specific. For we know when baked bricks first appear in the archaeological record of the ancient Near East as building materials.

Nor are we arguing from silence. There are hundreds of archaeological sites in the ancient Near East which have architectural remains. A number of them display layer after layer of architectural remains covering many centuries or even millennia. These architectural remains date from the beginnings of architecture in the ninth millennium down through the entire OT period and even later. Further, baked brick is virtually indestructible; so it would almost certainly be found if it were present.12

The ancient Near Eastern archaeological data regarding building materials used in the ancient Near East is so abundant and clear that every modern scholar writing about the history of architecture in the Near East comes to the same conclusion: although unbaked brick was extensively used for architecture from c. 8500 B.C. to Christian times, baked brick, though used occasionally for such things as drains or walkways, did not make an architectural appearance until c. 3500 B.C. and it was rarely used in architecture until c. 3100 B.C.13

Whether viewed in terms of breadth as at Chatal Huyuk with its dozens of unearthed buildings14 or in terms of depth as at Eridu with its eighteen successive building levels from c. 5000 to c. 2100 B.C., the archaeological data from the Near East universally testify that prior to c. 3100 B.C. the bricks used in architecture were unbaked. Indeed, Jacquetta Hawkes indicates in her archaeological survey that baked brick was not used for architecture anywhere in the entire world until c. 3000 B.C.15 The use of baked brick in the tower of Babel indicates very clearly, therefore, that it was not built before c. 3500 to 3000 B.C.

The use of bitumen (asphalt) for mortar also gives clear evidence of the earliest date to which we can ascribe the events of Gen 11:1-9. Since there are extensive remains of brick buildings in the sites of the ancient Near East and

14 James Mellaart estimates that Chatal Huyuk had more than 1000 houses. There are also fourteen continuous successive building levels at Chatal Huyuk dating between 7100 and 6300 B.C. (James Mellaart, The Archaeology of Ancient Turkey [Totowa, NJ.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1978], 13, 140).
bituminous mortar is nearly as indestructible as baked brick,\textsuperscript{16} it is easy to ascertain when bitumen began to be used as mortar for bricks. The evidence from thousands of bricks shows that bitumen was not used as a mortar for brick until baked brick appeared. Until c. 3500 to 3000 B.C., if mortar was used, it was gypsum or just mud. It is quite clear that bitumen was not used as mortar for brick buildings until the proto-historical period, that is c. 3500 to 3000 B.C.\textsuperscript{17}

IV. The Tower of Babel as a Ziggurat and Its Implications for Dating the Tower

Gen 11:4 tells us that the settlers in Sumer decided to build "a city and a tower." The word used for tower is מִגְדָּל (migdal). Since this word is often used in the OT for a watchtower or a defensive tower (e.g., Judg 9:45, 51; 2 Kgs 9:17; 17:9; Isa 5:2) and nowhere else refers to a ziggurat, what reason is there to believe that in Gen 11:4 it refers to a ziggurat? The first reason is that the setting is in Babylonia where the ziggurat was the most prominent structure in a city, both visually and ideologically.\textsuperscript{18} Secondly, the tower in our text was designed to bring fame and glory to the builders ("so that we may make a name for ourselves"). Mesopotamian kings often took pride in building ziggurats, but no such pride was taken in defensive towers which were simply parts of the city wall. The use of baked brick and bitumen also tells us that the migdal in our text was a ziggurat rather than a defensive tower, for baked brick and bitumen were very expensive in Mesopotamia and hence were saved for luxurious architecture like palaces, temples, and ziggurats.\textsuperscript{19}

It is also telling that in our text the making of the baked bricks is specifically mentioned first (v. 3) and after that the building of the city and tower (v. 4). This is exactly the way the building of the temple and ziggurat of Babylon are described in Enuma Elish (6.50-70) as well as in the account of Nabopolassar in Neo-Babylonian times.\textsuperscript{20} In addition, Nabopolassar is told to make the foundation of Babylon's ziggurat "secure in the bosom of the nether world, and make its summit like the heavens" just as our text describes the tower as having "its head in the heavens." Indeed it is typical of the descriptions of Mesopotamian ziggurats that they have their heads in the heavens. Thus King Samsuiluna is said to have made "the head of his ziggurat ... as high as the heavens." The top of Hammurabi's ziggurat was said to be "lofty in the heavens." And Esarhaddon, speaking of the ziggurat he built, says, "to the heavens I raised its head."\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{16} Forbes, Studies, 1:69.
\textsuperscript{18} Elizabeth C. Stone, "The Development of Cities in Ancient Mesopotamia," CANE 1:236, 238.
\textsuperscript{19} Singer, A History of Technology, 1:254-55; Forbes, Studies, 1:68.
\textsuperscript{20} So strong is the parallel with Enuma Elish that E. A. Speiser thought Gen 11:1-9 was a response to Enuma Elish. Andre Parrot, The Tower of Babel (London: SCM, 1955), 19.
As for the use of the word *migdal*, one wonders what other choice the Hebrews had for a word to refer to a ziggurat? Since they had no ziggurats in their culture, they would either have to borrow a word or use the closest word they could find in their own language. As Walton has pointed out, the word *migdal* is not inaccurate and has a similar etymology to *ziggurat*, being derived from *gedal* (to be large), while *ziggurat* is derived from the Akkadian word *zaqaru* (to be high).\(^{22}\) It is also noteworthy that when Herodotus (1:181-183) needed a word to describe the eight levels of the ziggurat he saw in Babylon, he chose πυργος, which is the Greek word most commonly used for defensive towers.

There is very good reason then to believe that the tower in our text refers to a ziggurat and not just to a defensive tower. The vast majority of scholars agree that a ziggurat is intended. We need to ask, therefore, when did ziggurats first appear in Babylonia? The answer is, during the period of Uruk 5 and 4, that is, the protohistoric period, 3500 to 3000 B.C.\(^ {23}\)

We see then that the archaeological facts coalesce around the dates 3500 to 3000 B.C. The building of a city not just a settlement, the use of baked brick, the use of bitumen for mortar and the fact that a ziggurat is being built all dovetail in date. This remarkable agreement makes it highly probable that the earliest date to which we can ascribe the tower of Babel as described in Gen 11:1-9 is c. 3500 to 3000 B.C. But, what is the latest date to which we can ascribe its building? There is a text saying that Sharkalisharri restored the temple-tower at Babylon c. 2250 B.C., and another text indicates that Sargon I destroyed Babylon c. 2350 B.C.\(^ {24}\) This suggests that there was a city established at Babylon before 2350 B.C.; so, allowing a modest 50 years of city history, we can set 2400 B.C. as the *terminus ante quem* for the first ziggurat built in Babylon.\(^ {25}\) We can thus date the building of the tower of Babel sometime between 3500 and 2400 B.C.

**V. The Meaning of Gen 11:1**

In Gen 11:1 we read `All the earth had one language and common words." The Hebrew literally says they had one "lip" and one "words." Parallel passages show that this simply means that everyone on earth spoke and could understand the grammar (Isa 19:18) and words (Ezek 3:5, 6) of everyone else. That is, all the earth spoke one and the same language.

The church, both Jewish and Christian, has historically understood this to mean that everyone on the entire earth spoke the same language. *Gen. Rab.* says,


\(^{25}\) Ziggurats began as elevated temples and did not become "true ziggurats" until c. 2100 B.C., after which they continued to be built or at least rebuilt until the fall of Babylon in the sixth century B.C.
"all the nations of the world." Sib. Or. 3:105 says, "the whole earth of humans." Chrysostom said, "all mankind." Augustine said, "the whole human race." Calvin said, "the human race." Luther, "the entire earth ... all the people." John Gill, "the inhabitants of the whole earth." Adam Clarke, "All mankind." Even after scientific data made such a history of language doubtful, nearly all commentators both liberal and conservative have continued to recognize that, nevertheless, this is what the biblical text says. Westermann says, "humankind ... the whole world." Sarna, "mankind." Cassuto says, "all the inhabitants of the earth." Keil and Delitzsch, "the whole human race." Mathews, "mankind." Wenham says, "all the inhabitants of the world ... mankind." Leupold says, "the whole human race.

Although some commentators thought that mankind had already begun to disperse or that those building the tower of Babel were just Nimrod and his followers or just the descendants of Ham, there has been universal agreement from the beginning right up to the present that Gen 11:1 means that every human being on earth was speaking the same language until God "confused the language" at the tower of Babel.

A handful of evangelical scholars, however, have apparently felt pressured by the fact that taken at face value the story conflicts, as we shall see more clearly later, with the archaeological evidence that not every human being on earth was speaking the same language at the time of the building of the tower of Babel. They have accordingly sought to adjust the story by suggesting that Gen 11:1 only refers to a small part of mankind speaking the same language, probably the Sumerians speaking Sumerian. They construe the words "all the earth" in 11:1 as a reference simply to Mesopotamia or even just southern Mesopotamia.

27 Augustine, City of God, 16. 10. 11 (NPNF' 2:316-17).
31 Adam Clarke, The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments... with a commentary and critical notes ... (New York: Abingdon, c. 1860), 1:88.
32 Claus Westermann, Genesis 1-11 (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), 542.
34 Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1964), 2:239.
Kidner and Kline suggest this "local" interpretation as an alternative possibility but give few supporting details. Reimer, Payne, and DeWitt each give supporting details and suggest that the event being described in Gen 11:7-9 is reflecting a cultural upheaval. Reimer sees the story of Gen 11:1-9 as reflecting the fall of the Uruk culture c. 3000 B.C.; and, the confusion of language is just a way of saying that diverse ethnic groups took over after the fall of the Uruk culture. Payne suggests that the upheaval was due to the influx of the Akkadians with their Semitic language into Sumer sometime around 3000 to 2500 B.C. The Akkadian language confused the Sumerian language and eventually displaced it. DeWitt suggests that the upheaval was due to the invading Elamites and Subarians in 1960 B.C. who put an end to the Sumerian civilization.

These are interesting suggestions, but before we can accept a "local" interpretation of Gen 11:1-9, compelling exegetical reasons should be given for rejecting the historical interpretation of the church, especially since it appears that apart from this handful of concordists, all modern scholars agree with the historic interpretation. But, neither Kline nor Reimer offers any exegetical reasons for suggesting this new interpretation; and Kidner only notes that v. 4b suggests the builders were fearful of attack, thus lending some support to the idea that they were a limited particular people. Verse 4b, however, only mentions a fear of being scattered. There is nothing implying a fear of attack unless the tower is interpreted as a defensive tower, and Kidner does not attempt to interpret the tower as a defensive tower rather than a ziggurat. Kidner's interpretation on the whole, in fact, leans toward the church's historic interpretation. He sees the act of God at the end of the story as a "fit discipline of an unruly race."

Payne's only exegetical defense for the "local" interpretation is that the word שָדַי (the earth) can mean either land or the world; and he says, "it need not be doubted that the author of this story was concerned with just his own immediate surroundings, southern Mesopotamia." But, Payne gives no reasons for interpreting שָדַי as land rather than the world. His argument is a bare assertion. DeWitt is the only one of the five who gives more than a one-sentence defense of this new interpretation. He gives three reasons for understanding שָדַי in 11:1 as referring just to Mesopotamia. His first reason is that Gen 10:5, 20, and 31 indicate "the natural development of diverse languages and dialects." Genesis 11:1 would not, therefore, speak of a total worldwide singleness of language because "the narrator would surely have caught so obvious a contradiction to the immediate context."

If DeWitt meant the various languages of the world developed over time as a natural course of events, this is not in contradiction to a miraculous judgment, as described in Gen 11:7-9, being the event which began the process. If DeWitt meant the events of Gen 10 preceded those of 11:1-9, he is adopting a position

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40 Payne, "Babel," 382.
41 DeWitt, "Historical Background," 17.
contrary to the vast majority of exegetes. Historically, commentators have recognized that the events of Gen 10 chronologically follow the events of 11:1-9, and no one has thought this makes an "obvious contradiction" between the meaning of Gen 10:5, 20 and 31 and understanding "all the earth" in Gen 11:1 as meaning the entire world.

Although the events in Gen 10 are chronologically later than the events in Gen 11:1-9, there are good contextual reasons why the church has not seen Gen 11:1-9 as a contradiction of Gen 10. The biblical account of the flood makes it abundantly clear that no human being was left alive on the earth after the flood except Noah and his sons (and their wives). Since everyone living on the earth after that would be descendants of this one family (9:19; 10:32), it was obvious that everyone on earth would be speaking the same language for some time after the flood. Since the flood and the sons of Noah are mentioned in Gen 10:32, it is natural to understand the next verse, Gen 11:1, as referring to a time shortly after the flood when everyone was speaking the same language. It is not surprising that exegetes throughout church history have identified "all the earth" in Gen 11:1 as the recent descendants of Noah, all still speaking the same language that he spoke.42

In addition to setting forth the background of the flood, Gen 10:32 (and its parallel in 9:19) speaks of a dispersion of the descendants of the sons of Noah over the whole world after the flood, a dispersion which involves a variety of languages (10:5, 20, 31). Since the very next thing one reads about is the dispersion of the builders at Babel into conflicting language groups (11:4, 8, 9), it is almost impossible not to make the connection between the two accounts. The reader naturally sees the judgment of Gen 11:7-9 as being the event which began the process of dispersion and language differentiation, with Gen 11:1 being a description of all the earth before the judgment at Babel.

DeWitt's second argument begins with the fact that מָרָק can mean either land or whole world. He then says, there is a sequence of local concepts beginning with "the whole Tigris-Euphrates basin [apparently in v. 1], a plain within the basin (v. 2), a city within the plain (v. 4), and a tower within the city (v. 4)." But this argument just begs the question for there is no reason why this sequence cannot begin with the whole world and work down to the tower.43

DeWitt's third argument is that the whole paragraph is "full of local expressions." His illustrations of these expressions are simply "a plain in the land of Shinar" and "let us build a city, and a tower whose top is unto heaven, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth." As a sub-argument, DeWitt adds that the unity of the language and the builders is "so localized that they look out upon their world with fear and are concerned for their security lest they be scattered through the whole earth." He concludes that the tower and city must be

42 Until the nineteenth century there was nearly unanimous opinion that the one language being spoken in Gen 11: 1 was Hebrew.
43 In Jer 26:6 there is a reverse sequence from the local temple to the city to the whole earth, and the earth is clearly universal.
local. The tower and city, of course, are local as are the expressions he mentions; but these facts in no way prove or even imply that the word רָאָב in Gen 11:1 is local any more than the address on an envelope with its local name, street, and city implies that the country to which it is sent is local.

DeWitt’s sub-argument, which is the same as the one argument offered by Kidner, is also not compelling. It is true that the builders felt a certain fear of being scattered; but the flood which their recent forefathers had survived was an epochal traumatic event. The survivors would be like the only eight people who survived a worldwide nuclear holocaust. An event like that would leave following generations with an undefined anxiety and fear which felt open to destruction just by virtue of being separated from the community. There is no need to suppose they feared attack from other groups of people; and there is no clear evidence in the text which indicates that an attack from other groups of people was the basis of their fear.

The concordists are largely just begging the question. Their arguments are insufficient for rejecting the historical interpretation of the church. There are very good contextual reasons supporting the historically accepted interpretation of "all the earth" in Gen 11:1 as referring to all mankind, the whole world; and these reasons were not even addressed by the concordists. A review of those reasons is, therefore, in order.

First of all the phrase כל הguards, "all the earth," in Gen 11:1 occurs right after a statement mentioning the anthropologically universal flood. It is the anthropological universality of the flood which is the contextual backdrop that defines the meaning of Gen 11:1.

Secondly, the statement that "all the earth" had the "same words and the same grammar" is emphatic. An emphatic statement like this does not fit a reference to one country out of many, each of which has the same words and the same grammar. Similarly, Geri 11:6a, "And Jehovah said, Behold, they are one people, and they all have one language," makes little if any sense when interpreted locally. Since the world delineated in Gen 10 is about as wide and diverse as Europe, Gen 11:1 interpreted locally would be like saying emphatically, "All of Italy spoke the same language (Italian);" and 11:6a would be like saying "Behold, the Italians are one people and they all have the same language." Why should this be emphatic or draw any attention? All of France also spoke the same language (French). All of Spain spoke the same language (Spanish). Every country spoke the same language. So what if the Italians did? But, if the statement is saying, "All the world spoke the same language," that is startling in light of the fact that they certainly do not all speak the same language now. It would be appropriate to make emphatic statements about the whole world speaking the same language because it would be so unusual compared to the present.

Thirdly, the terminology in Gen 11:5 ill fits a merely local interpretation. It calls the builders the "sons of men" (בני האדם), literally "sons of the man." 44

44 Not "sons of Adam" since an article is not used with personal names.
If the account had been merely local, it probably would have spoken of particular sons like the "sons of Heth" (Hittites, Gen 23:3) or the "sons of Midian" (l'vldianites, Gen 25:4). The phrase "the sons of the man" refers to mankind in general. Finally, the climax of the story in v. 9 is telling. If you interpret it locally, it says, "there the Lord confused the language of the whole land of Shinar." If people all over the world were already speaking different languages, this conclusion to the story seems rather insignificant and anti-climactic. But, if all of mankind was speaking one language until this event, v. 9 makes a fitting and resounding climax not only to the story but also to the universal history begun in Gen 1. Closing out that universal history with a story of mankind attempting to make a name for itself in a way that threatens to bring a curse upon mankind makes a great introduction to the next chapter of Genesis, wherein God promises to make a name for a man he chose, Abraham, and through him to bring a blessing upon all mankind (Gen 12:2, 3).

In summary, the concordist reinterpretation of Gen 11:1-9 has a very weak exegetical foundation and contrasts with the contextually rooted foundation which supports the historical interpretation of the church. The fact that no one until modern times interpreted "all the earth" in Gen 11:1-9 in a local way indicates that this interpretation does not arise naturally from Scripture. Just as concordists take Gen 1 out of context in order to make it harmonize with modern geography, geology, and astronomy so they take Gen 11:1-9 out of context in order to make it harmonize with modern geography and anthropology. In addition, although it might appear at first glance that the various "local" reinterpretations of Gen 11:1-9 are bringing the biblical text into harmony with its ancient Near Eastern context, the truth is they leave the biblical text at serious odds with ancient Near Eastern archaeology.

In the biblical text (11:7-9), the confusion of the builders' language is so sudden and definitive that the builders are no longer able to "understand one another's speech" and are thereby forced to give up completing the building of the city and tower. In Reimer's reconstruction of the event, although other languages may have come into the area c. 3000 B.C., the Sumerian language went right on being spoken and understood until at least the fall of Ur III, a thousand years later. So Reimer's reconstruction of the event actually contradicts Gen 11:7 and 9.

Payne's reconstruction of the event with its invasion of the Akkadians in 3000 to 2500 B.C. likewise contradicts Gen 11:7 and 9, since it leaves the Sumerian language intact for at least another 500 years, allowing plenty of time to finish building the city and tower. In addition, Payne's reconstruction of the event was built upon an archaeological theory popular at the time which hypothesized that the Akkadian language did not enter the area which the Bible

45 Cf. Gen 1:27; 6:1; 8:21; and 9:6 where the same phrase is used.
46 Several of the concordists themselves comment that the story looks like it is about mankind.
calls Shinar until the invasion of the Akkadians c. 3000 to 2500 B.C. Today a number of leading archaeologists believe that Akkadian was spoken alongside of Sumerian from the very beginning.48

DeWitt's reconstruction is a better archaeological fit to Gen 11:7 and 9, since the fall of Ur III in 1960 B.C. initiates the end of Sumerian as a spoken language; but it still leaves a generation or two before the language would have been understood only by scribes. DeWitt's reconstruction contradicts the biblical text in any event, however, because 1960 B.C. is too late for the first building of the city and tower of Babel as the biblical text demands.49 In addition, the biblical text demands that just one language be spoken in Shinar before the tower was begun; but, on DeWitt's reconstruction two languages were spoken in Shinar for four hundred years before the tower of Babel was begun, for we know that Akkadian was spoken in Shinar from the middle of the third millennium B.C.50

The "local" interpretations of Gen 11:1-9 which have been offered, therefore, violate the biblical text both contextually and archaeologically.51 They drive us back to the historical interpretation as the only contextually valid one. The more detailed concordist reinterpretations do, however, make a positive contribution in that they all fundamentally agree in dating the tower of Babel between c. 3000 and 2000 B.C.52

VI. Scientific Evidence for Diverse Languages Prior to the Tower of Babel

As we have seen, if Gen 11:1-9 is accepted as historically accurate, the building of the tower of Babel can be dated approximately between 3500 and 2400 B.C. The problem which arises is that when Gen 11:1-9 is interpreted in context it is saying that until the building of the tower of Babel, that is, until 3500 B.C. at the earliest, all people on earth spoke the same language. It is quite evident from archaeology, however, that this is not the case.

When we step outside the world known to the biblical writer, it becomes immediately obvious that diverse languages were in existence prior to and during the building of the tower of Babel. We should perhaps stop, however, to note just how large the earth was understood to be by the biblical writer. The extent of the earth in the understanding of the biblical writer is given in Gen

49 Even if the city and tower are moved to Ur as DeWitt suggests, it is still too late for the first building of the city and tower.
50 CAH3 1:1, 134; Gene B. Gragg, "Semitic Languages," OANE 4:517.
51 There may still be a tie to ancient Near Eastern literature including a possible Sumerian parallel. See Wenham, Genesis 1-15, 236-38.
52 John Walton, though not offering a concordistic interpretation, dates the tower "perhaps during the late Uruk period, or perhaps as late as the Jemdet Nasr period..." (3500 to 3000 B.C.) in "The Mesopotamian Background...," 173. All four of these evangelical scholars, therefore, confirm that the tower of Babel should be dated between 3000 and 2000 B.C., with 3500 B.C. as the earliest date.
10. The northern boundary is marked by the peoples around the Black Sea (Gen 10:2; Ezek 38:6). The southern boundary is marked by peoples living in the extreme south of the Arabian peninsula (Gen 10:7; cf. Matt 12:42). The eastern boundary is marked by Elam (Gen 10:22). The western boundary is at Tarshish (Gen 10:4), but its location is not certain. Although elsewhere in Scripture Tarshish may refer to Tartessos in Spain, in Gen 10 it probably refers to a location c. latitude ten degrees east, perhaps Sardinia, Tunis, or Carthage. "All the earth" in Gen 11:1 is then a circle or ellipse around 2400 miles in width and 1200 in height.53 Everyone in the ancient Near East understood this circular area to be the entire extent of the earth and that this earth was surrounded by a great ocean.54

Genesis 10 thus indicates (and history makes certain) that the writer of Gen 11 was oblivious to the existence of the Far East, Australia, and the Americas.55 Yet an awareness of these lands and the peoples living there is critically important to the history of language. For although samples of written languages do not appear in the Far East, Australia, or the West before 3500 B.C., archaeologically stratified sites and carbon-14 dating show that people certainly lived in these areas both before 3500 B.C. and during the building of the tower of Babel. In addition, the isolation of the Far East, Australia, and the Western peoples from the Near East and from each other, as well as the structures of the many languages in existence today that descended from them, virtually guarantee that they were not speaking Sumerian or any other ancient Near Eastern language.56

Spirit Cave in Thailand, for example, is a stratified site showing human occupation from before 5000 B.C. down to 250 B.C.57 We do not know what language they were speaking in Thailand from 5000 to 2000 B.C.; but, we can be sure it was not Sumerian.

Pan-p'o in China was continuously occupied by farmers of distinctly Mongoloid type for at least five hundred years before the earliest date for the tower of Babel.58 In addition, 113 potsherds were found at Pan-p'o incised with proto-Sinitic logographs. These logographs are archetypal to the Chinese language

55 We know from ancient history that no one in the ancient world envisioned the inhabited world to be significantly larger than the extent delineated in Gen 10. It did not extend to the Far East, Australia, or the Americas.
sa Ping-ti Ho, The Cradle of the East (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 16-18. It should be noted here that 3500 B.C. (the earliest date for the tower of Babel) would also have to
and testify clearly that a form of Chinese, unrelated to any language in the ancient Near East, was spoken before the tower of Babel was built, perhaps even thousands of years before it was built.\textsuperscript{59}

In Japan, the Jomon culture, which is evidenced at 25 different sites in Japan, seems to run in a continuous sequence from c. 10,000 B.C. to A.D. 1000. There are more than enough stratified sites and carbon-14 dates from 5000 to 2000 B.C. to show that the Ainu inhabited Japan well before the time that the tower of Babel began to be built and all during its building. The language which they spoke is not related even to Chinese, much less to Sumerian.\textsuperscript{60}

At Keniff Cave, Rocky Cave South, and numerous other sites in Australia, there are well-stratified stone and bone remains dating from c. 20,000 B.C. to A.D. 1500.\textsuperscript{61} Most relevant to our discussion are the dozen sites which are radiocarbon-dated from c. 5000 to 4000 B.C., i.e., before the tower of Babel began to be built.\textsuperscript{62} The people who left tools at these sites must have had a language; and the language they spoke may be related to other languages of Oceania, but certainly not to Sumerian.\textsuperscript{63}

At numerous sites in North America, such as Danger Cave in Utah, stratified remains of Indian cultures are radiocarbon-dated from 9000 to 3000 B.C.\textsuperscript{64} At Sierra Madre Oriental and other sites in Mexico, human and cultural remains are carbon-dated from 7000 to 1400 B.C.\textsuperscript{65} Since these Indians apparently came from Asia originally, we would expect their languages around 5000 B.C. to relate to Asian languages, but not to ancient Near Eastern languages. In any case, whatever languages they may have spoken, they were in America speaking them before the tower of Babel began to be built and, all during the time from 3500 to 2000 B.C.

We can say then that there is firm archaeological ground based both on radiocarbon dates and stratified sites to support the conclusion that long before the tower of Babel began to be built and all during the fourth millennium B.C., men were scattered over the entire globe speaking a multitude of different languages. This conclusion is clearly opposed to the assumptions underlying Gen 11:1-9 and opposite to the statements in 11:1 and 6 in particular. At this point someone might suggest that perhaps the tower of Babel should be dated earlier. But, on what basis would anyone suppose that it should be dated earlier than c. 3500 B.C.? One might be tempted to refer to the fact that a

\textsuperscript{59} Ho, Cradle, 34, 366-67; Diakonof, \textit{Early Antiquity}, 388.
\textsuperscript{61} Derek J. Mulvaney, \textit{The Prehistory of Australia} (New York: Praeger, 1969), 111, 135, 179.
\textsuperscript{62} Mulvaney, \textit{Prehistory}, 180.
\textsuperscript{63} "Australian Aboriginal Languages," \textit{The New Encyclopedia Britannica} (Chicago: 1908), 1:714.
\textsuperscript{65} Willey, \textit{Introduction}, 79-80.
stone tower was built in Jericho c. 8500 B.C. But this really has no bearing on the
tower of Babel because, as noted earlier, southern Mesopotamia where Baby-
lon is located did not even have permanent settlements until c. 5500 B.C. and
had no cities with architecture comparable to that of Jericho until c. 3500 B.C. at
the very earliest. 66 Hence, no one familiar with ancient Near Eastern archaeol-
ogy has been willing to date the tower of Babel any earlier than c. 3500 B.C.
Also, the further back the date of the tower is pushed, the less it fits the archaeo-
logical data and the more improbable the date becomes. Nor are the archaeo-
logical architectural data the only problem.

The flood account in Scripture reflects a relationship with second millennial
Mesopotamian accounts. Even granting a common ancestor to the biblical and
Mesopotamian accounts, every year that you move the date of the tower of
Babel (and the flood with it) earlier than 3500 B.C., the more improbable it
becomes that the two flood accounts would be so similar to each other since
they only would have been handed down orally. 67

The fact is, in order for the tower of Babel to have been the starting point
for the division of one human family into varying races and language groups as
Gen 11:1-9 demands, even a very conservative interpretation of the archaeo-
logical and anthropological evidence indicates that the tower would have to
have been built long before 10,000 B.C. But the chances of a monumental tower
and city being built in Babylon out of baked brick and bitumen before even the
Neolithic age is so improbable from an archaeological point of view as to be
virtually impossible.

One cannot date the tower of Babel early enough to fit all of the archaeo-
logical and anthropological data without implicitly espousing a methodology
which favors bare possibility over probability; and, such a methodology is anti-
thetical to serious scholarship.

VII. Creation Science, Carbon-14 Dating, and the Tower of Babel

In order to maintain the historical interpretation of the flood and the tower
of Babel, creation science simply denies the validity of the trustworthiness of
carbon-14 dating. The validity of carbon-14 dating sounds the death knell for
creation science; so, many papers have been written by creation scientists
attempting to throw doubt on its validity. 68 In the early decades of its use many
of the dates that carbon-14 dating produced were erroneous for one reason or
another; so, questioning was justified and non-Christians raised just as many

66 Van De Mieroop, The Ancient Mesopotamian City, 23.
67 Although there are important differences between the two accounts, no other flood account is
so close to the biblical account as the Mesopotamian. Virtually every scholar agrees they are
related to each other.
68 Creationist papers on radiocarbon-dating written between 1950 and 1990 are reviewed in
questions as Christians did. But there has been a significant refinement of the method in the last two decades and most importantly, its essential validity has been confirmed objectively by comparison with dendrochronology and with annually produced varves.

By comparing carbon-14 dates with known dates from counting tree rings in trees linked together stretching back from the present to 9300 B.C., the essential validity of carbon-14 dating has been proven. This validation of carbon-14 dating through comparison with the ages given by counting tree rings rests upon two long sequences of tree rings linked together. These sequences were independently produced by different scientists in different parts of the world using different species of trees.

The major objection from creation science to the validity of the tree ring sequences is that due to varying weather conditions a tree might produce more than one ring in one year. A very meticulous study, however, showed that the bristlecone pine, upon which the first long dendrochronology was based, does not normally produce more than one ring per year. The oak trees, upon which the other major long dendrochronology is based, so rarely grow extra rings that one can almost say they never grow them. Further, in order to be sure that no extra (or missing) ring has slipped into a sequence, each section of the sequence is based upon numerous trees growing over the same period of time, eliminating by comparison any trees that might have idiosyncratic rings. In addition, densities, which are independent of tree-ring widths, are compared as well. Because of this cross-checking, errors from extra or missing rings are eliminated.


70 I say "essential validity" because contaminated samples and other problems can cause individual carbon-14 dates to be invalid, and with dates prior to c. 750 B.C. there is a systematic deviation of carbon-14 dates from accurate dates with the result that the earlier dates must be calibrated, and even then there is room for slippage; but, in spite of problems with some particular dates, no one today doubts on scientific grounds that carbon-14 dating gives a valid overall guide to chronological sequencing.


73 M. G. L. Baillie, Tree-Ring Dating and Archaeology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 52 n. 81.

The patterns of tree rings which link the trees together in a sequence are kept from error by similar replication. Since thousands of annual rings occur in each bristlecone pine (up to 6000 in the oldest tree), one only has to find the overlapping patterns of rings a few times in order to make a long sequence. In the oak series where the rings are only available in hundreds, the examination and comparison of numerous trees from the same period eliminates anomalies and establishes the valid unique patterns which are used to link the overlapping trees. In addition to unique patterns of ring widths and densities, unique rings due to fire, flood, frost, or insect damage verify and validate the sequences. Carbon-14 dating, as it is applied to these dendrochronological sequences, is validated by the fact that the carbon-14 dates essentially agree with the tree-ring dates, systematically growing older as the older tree rings are tested. Also, although beginning around 750 B.C. the carbon-14 dates curve away from the tree ring dates, the curve of the dates obtained from dating the long European dendrochronological sequence matches the curve from dating the independent, long American tree-ring sequence. In addition, because the production of carbon-14 in the atmosphere varies slightly over time, the carbon-14 dates oscillate along the length of the calibration curve, forming small peaks and valleys, popularly called "wiggles." In the independently produced European and American tree sequences, even these "wiggles" match up. The fact that not only the long-term but even the short-term patterns in the carbon-14 dates match each other in two independently arrived at dendrochronological sequences is proof positive that the carbon-14 dating is valid.

So clear and irrefutable is this validation of carbon-14 dating that Dr. Gerald Aardsma, a nuclear physicist, a specialist in carbon-14 dating and a teacher at the Institute for Creation Research for five years, came to the conclusion that since carbon-14 dating according to creation science theory could be valid only after the flood, the flood must have occurred prior to 9300 B.C. Indeed, Aardsma calculates the date of the flood as close to 12,000 B.C., partly because it would take time after the flood for carbon-14 to stabilize in the ocean, which is necessary before carbon-14 dating can be accurate.

Aardsma set forth the evidence and his conclusions about the date of the flood in a paper published in 1990 and then in 1993 wrote a second paper.

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76 There is one section of the European oak chronology which is weak; but, even if it were shown to be inaccurate, the difference would be relatively insignificant.


79 Taylor, Long, and Kra, Radiocarbon, 20, 24-25, 37, 43; Goksu, Oberhofer; and Regulla, Scientific Dating Methods, 201-6.
answering objections which had been made to his reliance on dendrochronology in his 1990 paper.\textsuperscript{80} He received two immediate replies to his 1993 paper. One still objected that the dendrochronological data was just tentative and a Christian should hold to the biblical chronology regardless. Aardsma replied that the biblical chronology was not certain.

The tree ring/radiocarbon data are not tentative; the tree rings really exist (in excess of 10,000 of them, one after the other), and the concentrations of radiocarbon in these rings will not be different tomorrow than it was measured to be yesterday. These data will not vanish.\textsuperscript{81}

The other reply to his paper was from a Christian paleobotanist who said, As one who was raised with a belief in the accuracy of Ussher's chronology as modified by Edwin R. Thiele (1965), I have been led independently to the same conclusions with respect to the accuracy of dendrochronology as those reached by Gerald E. Aardsma.\textsuperscript{82}

We must say then that there is objective empirical proof of the validity of carbon-14 dating back to at least 9300 B.C.; and this is in addition to the fact that carbon-14 dating has also been objectively validated by comparison with the 10,000 years of annual varves found at the Lake of the Clouds in Minnesota.\textsuperscript{83} With carbon-14 dating objectively proven to be essentially valid back to 9300 B.C., one would have every reason to expect it to continue to give valid dates even further back in history; and its correlations with varves and annual deposits in ice cores going back even further in history demonstrate its validity before 9300 B.C., but its proven validity back to 9300 B.C. is all that is necessary to sustain the dates we have given above for the tower of Babel and for the archaeological finds prior to it.

Creation science, therefore, has no scientifically sound basis for rejecting the dating of the tower of Babel sometime in the third millennium B.C. (or 3500 B.C. at the earliest) or for rejecting the dating of numerous sites around the world during the third millennium and earlier which indicate that mankind was speaking numerous languages before and while the tower of Babel was being built. This means that neither concordism nor creation science has any viable solution to the conflict which exists between Gen 11:1-9 and the archaeological data which show that many peoples were speaking different languages during

\textsuperscript{80} Gerald Aardsma, "Radiocarbon, Dendrochronology and the Date of the Flood," in \textit{Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Creationism} (ed. Robert E. Walsh and Chris L. Brooks; Pittsburgh, PA: The Fellowship, 1990), 1-10; and "Tree Ring Dating and Multiple Ring Growth Per Year," 184-89.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{CRSQ} 30 (1993): 127-30.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{CRSQ} 30 (1993): 127-31.

\textsuperscript{83} Minze Stuiver, "Evidence for the Variation of Atmospheric C 14 Content in the Late Quaternary," in Karl K. Turekian, ed., \textit{The Late Cenozoic Glacial Ages} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 61. Creation science attempts to show that varves are not annual, but they ignore the fact that since the pollen and diatoms vary annually, on those rare occasions when additional layers/ year occur, they can be identified and discounted.
and prior to the building of the tower of Babel. A more biblical approach is needed, and Reformed theology has pioneered just such an approach.

VIII. Gracious Divine Accommodation to Limited Scientific Knowledge

Whenever the word "earth" is used in the OT in a universal sense, such as in Gen 1:10, it is defined historico-grammatically as a flat disc floating on a very deep ocean.84 This description of the earth reflects, in the words of Warfield, "an ordinary opinion of the writer's day."85 The divine revelation of God as Creator and Ruler of all the earth is accommodated in Gen 1 and elsewhere in the OT to the writer's limited understanding of geography.

In Gen 11:1-9 the revelation of God as Sovereign over the affairs of men was also accommodated to the writer's limited understanding of geography. That is, the writer was able to speak of "all the earth" having just one language because he had no knowledge of the lands and peoples of the Americas, Australia, the Far East, or even of all of Africa or Europe. As far as he was concerned, the earth extended only from Sardinia to Afghanistan, and from the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula to the northern boundaries of the Black and Caspian Seas (Gen 10);86 and the descendants of Noah had not yet spread out over even this limited earth (Gen 11:4). The divine revelation of God was accommodated to the writer's limited understanding of geography and anthropology.

We see another example of such divine accommodation to the limited geographical knowledge of the times in the NT. In NT times educated people were aware that the earth was a globe, but believed that the extent of the land area which mankind inhabited was only slightly greater in longitude than the extent of the earth in Gen 10 and not significantly greater in latitude. This limited area of land was also believed, as in OT times, to be encircled by a great impassable ocean.87 So in NT times just as in OT times, the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula was understood to be the southern limit of the entire land continent including Africa, the place where the land inhabited by man literally came to an end.88

When then we read Jesus' statement in Matt 12:42/Luke 11:41 that the Queen of Sheba came "from the ends of the earth," we may make the mistake

84 Seely, "The geographical meaning," 231-55.
86 Historical evidence shows that this was the entire extent of the earth as far as the writer and his hearers were concerned. Kings in both Egypt and Mesopotamia often spoke of ruling the entire earth; but when you inquire as to the extent of this earth, it is no bigger than as described in Gen 10. For example, Naram Sin (2254-2218 B.C.) called himself "king of the four quarters, king of the universe," but his kingdom extended only from Cyprus to the Gulf of Oman. Cf. Strabo, Geog. 1.1.6-8, 13; 1.3.22; Pliny, Nat. 2.166-67, 170, 242; 6.1, 36-37, 56-58; Seneca, Nat. 3.29.7; 4A.2.24; 5.18.10; 6.23.3.
87 Strabo, Pliny, and Seneca as in note 86; Tacitus, Germ. 45; Hist. Rech. 2.7; Josephus, AM. 1.31.
88 See the map of Strabo's world on left hand page opposite title page in volume 1 of The Geography of Strabo (LCL; 1917; repr., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).
of removing the statement from its historical context and understanding it in terms of our modern geographical knowledge as a merely figurative way of saying "a long distance." But the hearers of Jesus understood the statement literally. The "ends of the earth" referred to the boundary between the inhabited earth (essentially a single land mass) and the ocean that was believed to surround it. To the south the earth was believed to end in the area of Sheba which is at the southwestern tip of the Arabian peninsula opposite Ethiopia. Thus Pliny speaks of "the coast of the Ethiopic Ocean where habitation just begins." To the hearers of Jesus there was no land south of that for there was no land beyond "the ends of the earth." Hence, the hearers of Jesus would have understood Jesus' statement literally; and if they had thought that his inspired statement necessarily reflected God's omniscient knowledge of geography, it would have misled them into believing that God agreed there was no inhabited land south of the land of Sheba.

But Jesus did not mislead his hearers. He had no intention of revealing God's knowledge of geography or of correcting the science of the times. His statement was an accommodation pure and simple to the limited geographical understanding of the times. Thus, the inspired statements of Matt 12:42, Gen 1:14, and Gen 11:1 all reflect an understanding of the extent of the earth which did not include the Americas, Australia, the Far East, or even all of Africa or Europe. They are all accommodations to the geography of the times. The idea that God has thus accommodated his revelation to the knowledge of the times is not a new idea to Reformed theology. Warfield and others at "Old Princeton" allowed for such an understanding and Calvin fostered it.

Calvin, for example, understood Ps 72:8 to be describing the extent of the Messiah's kingdom as covering only the promised land. He commented, "David obviously accommodates his language to his own time, the amplitude of the kingdom of Christ not having been, as yet, fully unfolded." Calvin saw the description of the extent of the kingdom as being an accommodation to proximate knowledge available at the time. Although he saw the description as being limited by the revelation available at the time, the principle would be no different if he had seen it as being limited by the geographical knowledge available at the time. In the light of ancient Near Eastern literature not available to Calvin, the description of the earth in Ps 72:8, though very limited geographically, is a description of the entire earth in the mind of the writer. If Calvin had realized this he might well have said, "David obviously accommodates his language

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89 Liddell & Scott define "end" (περάς) as "end, limit, boundary." Since περάς; and ἐσχατος are synonyms [Tob 13:13 LXX (S)], see E. Earle Ellis, "The End of the Earth' (Acts 1:8)," BBR 1 (1991): 126.
90 Nat. 2.245.
91 Thus Rom 10:18 speaks of "all the earth" as synonymous with "the ends of the inhabited world." So also Philo, Legal. 18.173. Cf. Ign. Rom. 6:1; Ps 66:8 LXX (H 67:7); Ps 71:8 LXX (H 72:8).
93 Tarshish and Sheba (v. 10) were the western and southern ends of the known earth (cf. Ps 2:8). Seely, "Geographical Meaning," 249.
to the limited geographical knowledge of his own time, the full extent of the earth not having been, as yet, discovered."

Calvin gives us another example in his discussion of the geography of Eden in Gen 2:8-14. It had been suggested in Calvin's time that the reason two of the four rivers which are mentioned in that passage cannot be identified is that the flood had changed the face of the earth so that the topography of the earth in the time of Adam was different than it was in the time of Moses, and it is that earlier, different topography that is being described in Gen 2:8-14. Calvin rejected this idea and said, "Moses (in my opinion) accommodated his topography to the capacity of his age." Calvin believed that for the sake of being easily understood the description of the garden of Eden would be accommodated to the topographical knowledge available in the time of Moses. This is a reflection of Calvin's strong belief that Scripture was written in terms which any common Israelite could understand.

Similarly, when Gen 1 was criticized in Calvin's day for speaking of the sun and the moon as "two great lights" and the stars as small in comparison even though astronomers had proven that one of those stars, Saturn, was larger than the moon, Calvin acknowledged the validity of the scientific facts, but said,

Certainly in the first chapter he did not treat scientifically of the stars, as a philosopher would do; but he called them [the sun and moon] in a popular manner, according to their appearance to the uneducated, rather than according to truth, "two great lights."

Calvin did not expect the Scriptures to reflect modern scientific knowledge. In the quote above he even goes so far as to contrast the biblical description of nature given in Genesis with modern scientific knowledge. He refers to the biblical description as one of true appearance, but the modern scientific description as one of objective "truth." In addition, he presses this difference between the biblical description and the facts of modern science, saying, "The Holy Spirit had no intention to teach astronomy." He also invites those of his readers who might be interested in learning science to come not to Gen I but "to go elsewhere." And he clearly delineates that "elsewhere" as referring to modern professional scientists.

Admittedly, Calvin did not say that Gen 1:16 is an accommodation to the science of the times, but only to the appearance which nature gives. But as was the case with Ps 72:8, Calvin did not have available the data from anthropology and ancient history that we have today. These data show clearly that it is not merely appearances but the prescientific conclusions drawn from those appearances which are in view in Gen 1. In the biblical period people did not think of the stars as merely appearing small, but as actually being as small as they appear.

95 Ibid., 1:86-87,256-57.
For them the appearance was the reality. Stars could fall to the earth without destroying it (Dan 8:10). The idea that one of those stars (Saturn) was larger than the moon would have seemed incredible to them.

In NT times even many educated people still believed the stars were as small as they appear. As sophisticated a thinker as Seneca could say of the stars, “Although you pack a thousand of them together in one place they would never equal the size of our sun.” In the Sibylline Oracles both in 5:514-31 (first century A.D.) and in 7:124-25 (second century A.D.), every star in heaven falls and hits the earth; and although they cause a conflagration, both earth and man remain. In the NT, accordingly, the stars can fall and hit the earth (Rev 6:13, "into the earth," εἰς τὴν γῆν) without destroying it. This verse, incidentally, is another example of accommodation to the limited scientific knowledge of the times.

As late as the end of the fourth century, Augustine, after raising the question whether the stars were really very large but a long distance off or really as small as they appeared, concluded that they were as small as they appeared. In his commentary on Genesis, when he considered the same question in the early fifth century, he continued to believe they were as small as they appeared, and he cited Gen 1:16 as evidence that the sun and moon really were larger than the stars, saying, "We do better when we believe that these two luminaries are greater [in size] than the others, since Holy Scripture says of them, And God made the two great lights."

Given the fact that people as late and as sophisticated as Augustine understood Gen 1:16 literally, there can be no question that the original hearers of Gen 1:16 understood the words literally. The verse cannot be interpreted within its historical context as merely a reference to appearances, but rather as a reference to conclusions drawn from the appearances. To the original hearers, who believed the stars really were as small as they appear, the sun and moon really were literally "the two great lights." And if they had thought, as Augustine did, that this inspired statement in Gen 1:16 reflected God's omniscient knowledge of astronomy, it would have misled them, as it misled Augustine, into believing that God thought the sun and moon really were larger in size than the stars.

Calvin's understanding of the fact: that modern science is not being revealed in Gen 1:16 is a significant advance on Augustine's understanding. And, although Calvin's own limited knowledge prevented him from seeing that Gen 1:16 is not a reference merely to appearances but to conclusions drawn from those appearances, some of his comments on other passages show that his

97 Cf. the Babylonian Dream Book 328, CAD K:48; Ezek. Trag. 79, 80.
98 Nat. 7.1.
99 Cf. Isaiah 34:4 LXX; Sib. Or. 2.202; 5.514-31; 7.124-25; Seneca, Marc. 26.6 and Ben. 6.1.
100 I discuss Jesus' accommodation to the belief in the smallness of the stars (as well as other scientific beliefs of his day) in chapter three of my book, Inerrant Wisdom (Portland, Or.: Evangelical Reform, 1989).
101 Augustine, Letters of St. Augustine 14:3 (NPNF 1:231).
principle of accommodation can encompass false conclusions which people might draw merely from appearances. For example, in his comments on Jer 10:2 where the people are in awe of "signs" in the heavens, that is, supposed astrological omens given by the sun, moon, and stars, Calvin asks why the prophet speaks of "signs" in the sense of astrological omens when in fact there really are no such "signs." He answers that the prophet "accommodated himself to the notions which then prevailed." The accommodation is to a false conclusion drawn merely from the appearances of the sun, moon, and stars.

Calvin's comments on John 17:12 demonstrate this same understanding of accommodation. He first notes that the dignity of Judas's office gave him the appearance of being one of the elect and "no one would have formed a different opinion of him so long as he held that exalted rank." He then says that Jesus spoke of him in v. 12 as being one of the elect "in accommodation to the ordinary opinion of men." Note that the accommodation to "the ordinary opinion of men" is to an opinion about Judas which was contrary to the facts because it was a belief based only on appearances.

So although Calvin did not apply his concept of accommodation to scientific beliefs which were based only on appearances, he did provide for that possibility in principle. Further, since Calvin had a deep commitment to interpreting the Bible within its historical and cultural context, I think it is probable that if he had had the anthropological and ancient Near Eastern data available which we have today, he would have done so. He would have realized that such ideas as the solid firmament (Gen 1:6), the water above (Gen 1:7), the earth founded upon the seas (Ps 24:2), and the sun and moon as the largest lights (Gen 1:16) are prescientific beliefs based on appearances. Accordingly, instead of referring simply to appearances, I think he would have recognized they are really accommodations to the scientific "notions which then prevailed." In any case, our recognition of the fact that Scripture is accommodated to the scientific notions which then prevailed follows Calvin's understanding of accommodation in principle; and with the knowledge we have available today I do not believe we are really following Calvin if we are simply following him ad literatum. Calvin was a reformer willing to break with ecclesiastical tradition.

Calvin's willingness to break with ecclesiastical tradition is seen in his breaking with the Augustinian tradition that Scripture is a guide to science: where Augustine saw Gen 1:16 as a revelation of scientific truth, Calvin realized that Gen 1:16 was at best a reference simply to appearances and that the Holy Spirit

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The date of the Tower of Babel had "no intention to teach astronomy." These are clearly two different approaches to the subject of the relationship of Scripture to modern scientific knowledge; and although Calvin did not realize that Scripture is accommodated to the science of the times, he certainly was moving in that direction. As Gerrish said with regard to Calvin's geocentric understanding of Ps 19:4-6, given his doctrine of accommodation, "Would it have been so difficult for Calvin to assimilate the new ideas [of Copernicanism] and admit that the Psalmist's language was rather differently accommodated than he had imagined?"

But, given that Scripture is accommodated to the science of the times, we would like to understand why it has been accommodated in this way. I believe one reason, as Calvin's understanding of accommodation stressed, is that it facilitated communication of the theological truths being revealed. People of differing cultures (and the OT did arise in a culture quite different from ours) can find it almost impossible to accept some concepts that are common in another culture. It is not so much a question of understanding the concepts as of being able to accept them. When Anna Leorlowens tried to tell the children of Siam that in some countries rain freezes as it falls and comes down as a white substance called snow, "the whole school was indignant at what they considered an obvious effort to stretch truth out of all reason and impose a ridiculous fantasy on them." This proved to be a stumbling block to her authority as an educator until the king, who had been educated in England, assured the children that such a thing was possible. But, what if there had been no Western-educated king?

When anthropologist Paul Raffaele saw that the houses of the Indonesian Korowai Indians were built in the tops of trees, he tried to tell the Indians that in the country where he came from people live in buildings ten times taller than the trees. The Indians found this completely unbelievable. They snorted, "Humans cannot climb that high." The anthropologist tried to explain elevators, but the Indians found this just as unbelievable as the original story. Sometimes, because of a radical difference in cultural background, a modern concept simply cannot be accepted.

In our time, there has been so much emphasis upon outer space and space travel that we find it almost impossible to grasp how anyone could ever have believed the sky was solid. Yet, until the sixteenth century virtually everyone everywhere in the world believed the sky was solid and had so believed for thousands of years. The only exception to this belief before recent centuries was a philosophical school which arose in China around A.D. 200 that believed the sky was not solid. Yet, a Jesuit missionary coming upon this school of thought in the sixteenth century found this idea of a non-solid sky so impossible to accept that

105 Calvin's break with the Augustinian tradition is also seen in the contrasting ways in which he and Augustine interpreted the firmament and the water above in Gen 1.
107 Margaret Landon, Anna and the King of Siam (New York: John Day, 1943), 229.
he wrote home saying the idea that the sky is not solid is "one of the absurdities of the Chinese."\(^{108}\)

The inability to understand a concept which does not fit a current paradigm is not a matter of intelligence, but of mentality, that is, of culturally ingrained concepts. I believe then, in line with Calvin, that for the sake of facilitating as opposed to hindering communication God wisely accommodated his revelation to ancient scientific paradigms and left to mankind the task of discovering the scientific truths which would change those paradigms. And this brings us to the second basic reason why God has accommodated his revelation to ancient science. He has endowed humankind with the grace, ability, and intellectual curiosity to discover the truths of the natural world, and more importantly, has delegated to humankind the responsibility to discover those truths and thus subdue the earth (Gen 1:26-28). God accordingly has not attempted in Scripture to correct the scientific "notions which then prevailed" but rather accommodated his revelation to them. Increasing the dominion of humankind over the natural world through the advance of scientific knowledge is our divinely delegated responsibility.

In summary, in order to avoid obstacles to communication which might become stumbling blocks, and to respect the divine decision to delegate to humankind the responsibility for the discovery of natural knowledge, Scripture is accommodated in Gen 11:1-9 (as well as in Gen 1 and Matt 12:42) to the limited geographical and anthropological knowledge available at the time. This is in accord with Calvin's understanding of accommodation for he showed in his expositions of Ps 72:8-10 and Gen 2:8-14 that he believed God accommodated his revelation to the limited knowledge available at the time. In addition, in his exposition of Gen 1:16 he broke with the old Augustinian belief that Scripture reveals modern scientific knowledge. He believed Scripture was accommodated in the realm of natural science to mere phenomenal appearances. But he also showed in his expositions of Jer 10:2 and John 17:12 that he believed Scripture could be accommodated to false conclusions which might be drawn from mere phenomenal appearances. It is thus in accord with the principles of Calvin's doctrine of accommodation to believe that Scripture is accommodated not just to phenomenal appearances, but to the limited scientific knowledge of the times, to the scientific "notions which then prevailed."

I would only add that this divine accommodation which we find in Scripture to the scientific "notions which then prevailed" does not reflect negatively upon God's character as Truth. It is logically invalid to equate accommodation with making an error or lying. Temporarily allowing a prescientific people to hold onto their ingrained beliefs about the natural world is not at all the same thing as lying to them. Rather, it is following the principle of becoming "all things to all men." It is a manifestation of amazing grace.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL MEANING OF "EARTH" AND "SEAS" IN GENESIS 1:10

PAUL H. SEELY

When a biblical text is interpreted outside of its historical context, it is often unconsciously interpreted in terms of the reader's own culture, time and beliefs. This has happened more than once to Genesis 1: To avoid distorting Genesis 1 in this way, the serious exegete will insist upon placing this chapter within its own historical context. When we do this, the meaning of "earth" and "seas" in Gen 1:10 is found to be quite different from the modern western notions.

We will look closely at the immediate context of Gen 1:10 and at all the biblical data bearing upon its meaning; but, we must begin by looking at it first within its historical context beginning with what might be called the outer circle of that context, namely, the conception of the "earth" which human beings in general automatically have until they are informed otherwise by modern science.

I. The Scientifically Naive View of the Earth in Tribal Societies

Levy-Bruhl, commenting on the beliefs of scientifically naive tribal peoples, wrote [italics mine], "Their cosmography as far as we know anything about it was practically of one type up til the time of the white man's arrival upon the scene. That of the Borneo Dayaks may furnish us with some idea of it. 'They consider the earth to be a flat surface, whilst the heavens are a dome, a kind of glass shade which covers the earth and comes in contact with it at the horizon.'" Alexander similarly spoke of "The usual primitive conception of the world's form" as "flat and round below and surmounted above by a solid firmament in the shape of an inverted bowl."¹

It is to be noted that in the usual scientifically naive conception of the universe not only is the earth flat, but the sky is understood as an inverted bowl that literally touches the earth at the horizon. Thus for the Thonga, "Heaven is for them an immense solid vault which rests upon the earth. The place where heaven touches the earth is called bugimamusi ... the place

where women can lean their [cooking] pestles against the vault." For the Yakuts "the outer edge of the earth is said to touch the rim of a hemispherical sky."²

Since the sky is usually thought by pre-scientific peoples to be a solid hemisphere literally touching the earth (or sea) at the horizon, the earth must necessarily be thought of as flat. It is impossible to conceive of the sky as a hemisphere touching the earth at the horizon, and yet conceive of the earth as a globe. If the earth were a globe but the sky just a hemisphere touching the earth, half of the earth would have no sky. The shape of the earth is accordingly explicitly or implicitly described by all pre-scientific peoples as being flat, and usually circular—a single disc-shaped continent. Thus, to give just a few examples, the earth of the Bavenda and Bathonga (African tribes) "is thought to be a large flat disk floating in water, roofed by the dome of the sky, makholi, which meets the circumference of the disk at the horizon..." Among the Australian aboriginals "there seems to be a universal belief... that the earth is a flat surface, surmounted by the solid vault of the sky." The earth of the South American Yanomamo is described as "an inverted platter: gently curved, thin, circular, rigid..." Indians both in Mexico and North America conceive of the earth "as a large wheel or disk..."³

Scientifically naive peoples everywhere regularly conceive of the earth as a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc. There are rare exceptions; but, in no case have they thought of the earth as a planetary globe. The human mind, as clearly evidenced by prescientific peoples, just naturally defines the earth as flat until informed otherwise by modern science. Even pre-adolescent children in modern Western societies think of the earth as flat until informed otherwise by modern science.⁴

1. The Ancient Far Eastern View of the Earth

Early Japanese writings do not describe the shape of the earth, but like the Ainu, it was conceived of as floating on water and hence by implication not our planetary globe.⁵

The ancient Chinese described the sky as an "inverted bowl" and the earth as flat or a truncated four-sided pyramid. In this view "Earth is still and square, while the round sky (with 'stars fixed to the surface') revolves:

² Levy-Bruhl, Primitive, 354; Uno Holmberg, The Mythology of All Races 4: Finno-Ugric, 308.
⁵ C. Etter, Ainu Folklore (Chicago: Wilcox & Follet, 1949) 18, 19, note 37.
the yang sky contrasts with the yin earth."^6 Later, more mundane Chinese maps represent the ocean flowing around the earth in a circle and the earth as more or less disc-shaped.\(^7\) So although the earth in earliest Chinese thought was considered square-apparently for philosophical reasons, the concept of a circular earth was also held by many. In both cases, the earth was considered a single continent that was fundamentally flat, and never a planetary globe.

The Rig Veda shows the earliest Indian conceptions of the earth. The earth and sky are compared to two wheels at the ends of an axle, but also to two bowls and to two leather bags. The concept of the earth as a wheel is the usual concept of the earth as a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc. The Indian concept of two bowls or leather bags represents the earth as a right-side-up bowl covered at its rim by the inverted bowl of the sky, the two halves composing the whole universe. Gombrich concluded from this that the earth was conceived of as concave.\(^8\) It is entirely possible, however, that the concavity of the earth-half of the universe is reflecting either the earth bulging below to contain the realm of the dead (a common conception) or perhaps, as was enunciated in later Vedic thought, part of the bulge is really a subterranean ocean. I think, therefore, that in all Indian conceptions of the earth the surface of the earth was conceived of as a single continent that was flat and circular, and in any case never a planetary globe. Later Indian thought favored the concept of the earth as a flat disc; and classical Hindu, Buddhist and Jain cosmologies are all in agreement that "our level is a vast disc...."^9

2. The Ancient Near Eastern View of the Earth

The noted Egyptologist, John Wilson, tells us that in Egyptian thought the earth was conceived of as a flat platter with a corrugated rim. The inside bottom of the platter was the flat alluvial plain of Egypt, and the corrugated rim was the rim of mountains which were the foreign lands.\(^10\)

H. Schafer, although agreeing the earth was conceived of as flat, doubted there was any sure evidence for the circularity of the earth in Egyptian


thought. Keel, however, noting that the ocean around the earth was long
conceived of by the Egyptians as circular, concluded "This fact suggests
that in Egypt, visualization of the earth as a circular disc was from very
ancient times at least an option." Keel noted that the concept of earth as
a circular disc is supported by Egyptian evidence as early as the fourteenth
century B.C., wherein the figure of Osiris or Geb [the earth god] is repres-
ented as circular.11 In addition, contrary to Schafer, there is evidence for
belief in the circularity of the earth from the time of Ramses II (1304-1237)
and III in inscriptions which speak of "... the Circle of the Earth."12
There is good reason, then, for believing that the ancient Egyptians con-
ceived of the earth as a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc;
and, in any case certainly not as a planetary globe.

In ancient Sumer, according to both Kramer and Lambert, the earth
was conceived of as a "flat disc." Both scholars are aware that the Baby-
lonian view of the universe, which thought of the earth as a disc, was
probably inherited from Sumer.13 Heidel noted that in an early version of
creation in the An Antum list of gods (which are Sumerian) "Sky and earth
are apparently to be viewed as two enormous discs...."14

In Babylonia one of the clearest indications that the earth was conceived
as flat is found in Tablet V of Enuma elish, where half the body of Tiamat,
having been split in two by Marduk, is laid out as a base for mountains
(lines 53, 57). Tiamat's half-body is laid out over the deep whence the
Tigris and Euphrates flow out from her eyes (lines 54, 55). Livingstone
translates line 62 "Half of her [Tiamat] he made flat and firm, the
earth."15

The circularity of the earth in Babylonian thought is seen directly in a
sixth century B.C. clay map of the world, which most scholars believe is
derived from much earlier models. Clifford noted that the world in this
map is conceived of "as a disk."16

11 Heinrich Schafer, Agyptische and heutige Kunst and Weltgebdude der alien Agypter (Berlin:
Walter de Gruyter, 1928) 85; Othmar Keel, The Symbolism of the Biblical World (New York:
12 Adolph Erman, Literature of the Ancient Egyptians (London: Methuen, 1927) 259; James
64.
13 S. N. Kramer, The Sumerians (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1963) 113; W G. Lambert,
"The Cosmology of Sumer and Babylon" in Ancient Cosmologies, 47.
172, 180.
15 AJVET 3d ed., 501-2; Alasdair Livingstone, Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works
16 See a photograph of the Mappa Mundi in The Illustrated Bible Dictionary I, ed. N. Hillyer,
(Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1980) 168; The two best discussions of the Mappa Mundi that I have
seen are in Lambert, "The Cosmology," 59-60 (although I think the two lines in the center
of the map mark only the Euphrates, not the Tigris and the Euphrates) and B. Meissner,
"Babylonische un.d griechische Landkarten," Klio 19 (1925) 97-100; Richard J. Clifford, The
Lambert, noting that the Babylonians were "without any understanding of a round \([spherical]\) earth," went on to describe the Babylonian universe as several levels of discs. Heidel also describes heaven and earth in the *Enuma elish* as "two great discs . . . ."  

There is no question that the Babylonians thought of the earth as a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc. Even later when the Neo-Babylonians developed a highly sophisticated mathematical astronomy, they did not develop the concept of a spherical earth.  

We see, then, that in ancient Near Eastern thought the earth was always conceived of as a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc, never as a planetary globe.

3. *The Ancient Western View of the Earth*

Homer's view of the universe, as well as Hesiod's, is the usual scientifically naive view: "The sky is a solid hemisphere like a bowl (\textit{Il.17,425 ... 5,504, Od.3,2 ... 15,329 and 17,565.}) . . . It covers the flat round earth." The earth is clearly a disc. Thales (c. 600 B.C.) and Anaximander (c. 575 B.C.) both conceived of the earth as a disc. Anaximenes (c. 550 B.C.) thought it was flat, but shaped "like a table." Xenophanes of Colophon (c. 525 B.C.) believed the earth was flat.

In the beginning of the fifth century B.C., however, the idea of the earth as a planetary globe apparently began to emerge. Both the Pythagoreans (c. 500 B.C.) and Parmenides (c. 475 B.C.) are usually credited with accepting the view of the earth as a planetary globe. Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Leucippus, however, (all c. 450 B.C.) supposed the earth to be flat as did Democritus (c. 425 B.C.).

In addition, the majority of Greeks down to 400 B.C. still thought of the earth as disc-shaped, as is clearly evidenced by the fact that map makers in the time of Herodotus (c. 400 B.C.) uniformly rendered the earth as a disc.
(Herodotus 4:36). As for Herodotus, Thomson says "Nowhere does Hersonotus betray a suspicion that the earth may not be flat."23

It is in Plato (c. 375 B.C.) that one first finds a sure clear description of the earth as a globe. Plato’s Phaedo describes the earth as "round" (108E) "like a ball" (110B) and as his Timaeus (38C,D) shows this is within the context of a geocentric universe. Thomson says, "Certainly it was Plato's adoption that gave the globe a wider currency." From Plato on, nearly all philosophers thought of the earth as spherical. However, nonscientific writers and common people went on believing the earth was flat.24

The ancient western view of the earth's shape from Homer to Plato (or possibly the fifth century B.C.) was then most commonly that of a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc. Further, even into New Testament times most common people continued to believe the earth was a flat single continent.

In summary we have seen that all scientifically naive tribal peoples and both eastern and western thinkers until the fifth century B.C. (at the earliest) conceived of the earth as a flat single continent, usually in the shape of a flat circular disc. No one until the fifth century B.C. conceived of the earth as a planetary globe, and even then most people went on believing the earth was a flat single continent.

II. The Historico-Grammatical Meaning of “Earth” in Gen 1:10

This brings us to the meaning of "earth" in Gen 1 and 1:10 in particular. Gen 1, regardless of when it may have been last edited, belongs conceptually to the second millennium B.C.--long before Plato's time and the rise of the concept of a planetary globe. Within its historical context, therefore, the conception of the "earth" in Gen 1 is most probably that of a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc. In addition the Hebrews were influenced via the patriarchs by Mesopotamian concepts and via Moses and their time in Egypt by Egyptian concepts.25 It is, therefore, all the more historically probable that the writer and first readers of Gen 1 thought of the earth as a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc.

23 Thomson, History, 98.
There is also archaeological and biblical evidence that the early Hebrews were technologically and hence by implication generally scientifically inferior to the peoples surrounding them. So with all the peoples around them thinking of the earth as a flat circular disc, it is highly improbable that the Hebrews were thinking of the earth in modern scientific terms as a planetary globe. Unless then we remove Gen 1 from its historical context, we must say that the historical meaning of "earth" in Gen 1:10 is very probably a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc.

We must now examine the grammatical meaning of "earth" in Gen 1:10. The Hebrew word for earth (תָּרָק, 'eres) in Gen 1 has several meanings in the OT, delineated in KB as (1) ground, piece of ground (2) territory, country (3) the whole of the land, the earth. In light of the universality of Gen 1:1, the meaning of 'eres in that verse is clearly the third listed meaning. If isolated from its historical context, 'eres in Gen 1:1 could conceivably be a reference to the earth as a planetary globe. The word 'eres in Gen 1:10 could then be a reference simply to the continents on that planetary globe especially since it is the "dry land" (יָבָּס, yabbasa) in contrast to the wet sea (cf. Exod 4:9; 14:16, 22, 29) which God in Gen 1:10 names 'eres, "Earth."

But, interpreting Gen 1:10 as a reference to continents on a planetary globe, although seeming quite reasonable to the modern western reader, is completely contrary to its historical context. This is bad enough to make such an interpretation improbable; in addition, there is nothing whatsoever in the biblical context--either immediate or remote--which defines 'eres in Gen 1:1 as a planetary globe. This latter meaning is derived purely from our knowledge of modern Western science and simply read into the text. Interpreting 'eres in Gen 1:1 as a planetary globe is eisegetical, not exegetical.

The 'eres in Gen 1:1 is indeed the entire earth; and since the 'eres in Gen 1:2 refers back to the 'eres mentioned in Gen 1:1, the 'eres in Gen 1:2, is also a reference to the entire earth. So, when the 'eres which had been buried in water and was barren (1:2) is separated from the water and made to sprout vegetation in Gen 1:9-12, it too is the entire earth. The dry land of Gen 1:10 is the entire earth. This fits the historical context like a hand to a glove. The writer is speaking of the entire 'eres as (flat) dry land, not as a globe.

The writer of Gen 1 also makes it clear in verses six through eight that he is not defining 'eres as a globe, even in Gen 1:1 and 2. That is, in Gen 1:6-8 the entire sky is created in the form of a rock-solid firmament. This firmament was understood by all peoples in OT times to be in the

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shape of a hemispherical dome (or a disc) which literally touched the earth (or the sea around the earth) at the horizon. Either way, whether the sky was conceived as a hemispherical dome touching the earth at the horizon or a flat unbending disc above the earth, the earth below cannot be a sphere because if it were, half of the earth would have no sky. The biblical context, therefore, not only provides no basis for defining 'eres in Gen 1:1 as a globe (and in Gen 1:10 as the continents on that globe), it excludes this interpretation by giving us a concept of the sky which coheres perfectly with the ancient Near Eastern concept of the earth as a flat circular disc but cannot be harmonized with the modern concept of the earth as a globe.

It is worth noting also that interpreting 'eres in Gen 1:10 as the dry land on a globe does not fit the context of modern science any better than it fits the context of Gen 1. For according to modern science the dry land on the globe preceded the formation of the sea by millions of years; but, according to Gen 1:1-10, the sea (אָרֶץ, tehom) preceded the formation of the dry land.28 This fact again tells us that the universe of Gen 1 is the universe as understood by all ancient Near Eastern peoples at that time and not as understood in our time. The earth of Gen 1:1, 2 and 10 is not a globe but a single flat continent in the shape of a flat circular disc.

Someone may ask, what about Isa 40:22 which speaks of "the circle of the earth"? The answer is there is nothing either in the underlying Hebrew word אֵין, hug) or in the context which necessarily implies anything more than the circularity of the flat earth-disc which the historical context and Gen 1 have given us as the meaning of "earth." If Isaiah had intended to speak of the earth as a globe, he would probably have used the word he used in 22:18 (ようです, dur), meaning "ball." One may recall that the phrase, "circle of the earth," was also used in Egypt with reference to the earth as a flat circular disc.29

In later biblical writings we also see that the earth was conceived of as flat. In Dan 4:10,11 (MT 7,8) repeated in 4:20 (MT 17), it is said of a tree seen in a dream that it was of "enormous height and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the end of all the earth" ("visible to all the earth," 4:20). Daniel interprets the tree as a reference to King Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom: "your greatness grew until it reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth" (4:22[MT 19]). Nebuchadnezzar of course did not really rule the entire earth even as known at that time, but this does not mean that the phrase "to the end of the earth" should be interpreted as limited to an area less than the entire earth-continent.

Ancient Near Eastern kings, regardless of the real size of their empire, were throughout the first millennium B.C. (and earlier) regularly described as rulers of the entire earth. Thus the kings Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076), Shalmaneser III (858-824) and Esarhaddon (680-669) were all described

29 See note 12.
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in inscriptions as "king of the world ... king of (all) the four rims (of the earth)." Xerxes (485-465) says, "I am Xerxes ... the king of this (entire) big and far(-reaching) earth." Nebuchadnezzar II himself says, ". . . (from) the Upper Sea (to) the Lower Sea [which means the whole earth continent]" and adds, "I have made ... the city of Babylon to the foremost among all the countries and every human habitation." Nebuchadnezzar II himself says, "I am Xerxes ... the king of this (entire) big and far(-reaching) earth." Nebuchadnezzar II himself says, "I have made ... the city of Babylon to the foremost among all the countries and every human habitation." As will be seen below ancient Egyptian kings also regularly claimed to rule over the entire earth. In all of these inscriptions it is the literal entire earth, that is, the entire flat earth-disc which is described as the extent of the king's dominion. Interpreted within their historical context, therefore, the words, "all the earth," in Dan 4:11 and 20 (being a description of the extent of Nebuchadnezzar's empire) refer literally to the entire earth.

The statement in Dan 4:11 that the tree was "visible to the end of all the earth" means, therefore, that the tree was so tall it was able to be seen by everyone living on earth. Yet the fact is, no matter how tall a tree might become it will not be able to be seen by everyone living on a globe (and many people were living south of the equator in the time of Nebuchadnezzar). Nor does the fact that this tree was seen in a dream give us any reason for obviating the implication of the text that the entire earth was conceived of as flat, for the universal visibility of the tree is predicated upon its height, not upon its being seen in a dream. The statement only makes sense if the earth is defined as a flat continent. Dan 4, therefore, adds confirmation that "earth" in Gen 1 is properly defined as flat, not spherical.

Job 37:3 similarly implies that when God makes lightning, it is seen to the corners of the earth, that is, to the extent of the earth in all directions. The universality of these same terms in Isa 11:11,12 show that Job is speaking of the entire earth, not just a part of it. But lightning, no more than a tall tree, could be seen to the extent of a globe. Regardless of the hyperbole the most natural way of understanding Job 37:3 is that the author was thinking of the earth as flat.

A final verse of Scripture which testifies that the "earth" was conceived in the OT as a single flat continent is Job 38:13. In a clearly cosmological context, not just local, this verse speaks of dawn grasping the earth by its "extremity or hem" (סְרִף, kanap; cf. Num 15:38; I Sam 15:27) and shaking the wicked out of it. The verse is comparing the earth to a blanket or garment picked up at one end and shaken. A globe is not really comparable to a blanket or garment in this way. You cannot pick up a globe at one end. It does not even have an end. The picture fits in a natural way the concept of the earth as a single flat continent.

A final OT concept which implies the earth is a flat continent, not a globe, is the belief that it was spread out over the sea. (See the next section). In summary, there is no OT verse which implies the sphericity of the earth. Rather, all OT references which imply the shape of the earth confirm the historico-grammatical definition of "earth" in Gen 1:10: the earth is a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc.

III. The Sea that Surrounds and Supports the Earth-Disc

As with the meaning of "earth" in Gen 1:10, one cannot expect to have a valid interpretation of the word, "sea(s)" in that verse if one removes it from its historical context. We begin, therefore, with the outermost circle of that historical context, the normal conceptions of pre-scientific minds, as seen in the thinking of tribal peoples around the world. Many of these peoples have no reported concept of the sea; but, all of those who do seem to agree that the sea surrounds the earth-disc, both around its circumference and below it.

Speaking of the nomadic Altaic peoples of inner Asia (Turkic, Mongols, Tungus), for example, Dupre writes, "The earth is thought to be a circular disc surrounded by an immense ocean." Holmberg says all Asiatic peoples have this concept of an ocean around the earth; and then relates creation stories which show that these Asiatic peoples believed the earth floated on the sea that surrounded it. These stories all mention "the little earth-disc just formed upon the surface of the water," "on the surface in the middle of the ocean."

Edward Seler, speaking of ancient Mexican beliefs, said, "In the manner of other peoples, the earth was conceived by Mexicans as a large wheel or disc completely surrounded by water." The creation myths of the Chorti, Mayas of Guatamala, speak of "four seas that are surrounding and beneath the world." Similarly, "according to the cosmology of the Finno-Ugrians, a stream encircles the world. . . ." This stream is called by some of them "a vast ocean." In their creation story the earth is "spread out over the primal sea." The west African Dan tribe say heaven (an enclosing dome) "ends all around in the sea." Another African tribe (unidentified) says, "At the beginning everything was water." Then a god came to create the dry land, bringing some pieces of iron and earth with him. He "placed the iron on the water" and "spread the earth over it." The Bavenda and the Bathonga say the earth is "a large flat disk floating on water." In North America both the Navaho and the Zuni believed the earth was encircled by an ocean; and, the "earth-diver" myths which are often found among American Indians describe the earth as an island that "floats upon

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the primeval waters." The earth is explicitly described as an island floating on the surrounding sea by the Huron, the Cherokee, the Bilquala, the Winebago and the Athapascans.  

Island peoples naturally think of the earth as surrounded by and floating on the sea. This is documented in the reports of tribal peoples in New Guinea, New Zealand, Micronesia, Polynesia and Japan.  

In every pre-scientific cosmology which I have seen that mentions the sea, the earth is described as circular, floating in a circular sea. The concept of a circular earth set in a circular sea is, of course, the natural result of a scientifically naive person observing the circular horizon of both earth and sea. Since the prescientific mind naturally concludes that the earth is a flat disc, it also just naturally concludes that since this disc is surrounded by a flat circular sea, it must be floating upon that sea. Thus it is that all over the world we find the belief in the earth as a flat circular disc floating in the middle of a single circular sea.

1. The Ancient Far Eastern Belief in a Floating Earth  

Early Japanese writings perceived the earth as an island in a surrounding ocean. The oldest Japanese sources also say, "of old when the land was young, it floated about as if it were floating oil."  

The oldest Chinese view of the universe clearly involved a "rim ocean" surrounding a square earth, with the sea circular at the far edge to meet the inverted bowl-like firmament that touches down on all sides. Thai cosmology also has a clearly circular ocean surrounding the earth.  

There is no explicit statement in early Chinese literature which says the earth is floating, but since being surrounded by sea made the earth a large island, and since we know the Chinese thought of islands as floating on the sea, it is a fair presumption that they thought of the earth as floating. This is implied in the relatively early Tao Te Ching which speaks of the importance of the power of "the One" without which the "settled earth might


"In later Chinese cosmological systems we are specifically told "the earth floats on the water;" and we might add that this water is the sea that surrounds the earth.\textsuperscript{39}

With regard to Indian thought the Rig Veda seems to refer to a surrounding ocean in texts like 1:116:5, "that ocean that has no beginning" (circular) and 5:85:6 which mentions "the one single ocean." Sproul says the word \textit{Rasa} in Rig Veda 10:121 is a reference to the "earth-encircling stream." Later Vedic texts state explicitly that the earth is surrounded by water. Buddhist and Hindu cosmologies have a circular ocean around the earth.\textsuperscript{40} Gombrich says the concept of waters under the earth is not found in the Rig Veda though "alluded to several times in later Vedic literature, and we shall meet them in the earliest Buddhist texts." Kuiper, in contrast, believes the Rig Veda refers to the earth floating on the primeval waters. Kuiper's view seems to be confirmed by other scholars who interpret the word \textit{Rasa} in the Rig Veda to mean a river that goes around the earth and surrounds the earth from below. The earth thus floats on the sea that surrounds it. I conclude that the concept of water under the earth is envisioned in the Rig Veda but only clearly enunciated in later Vedic texts such as the one which says the earth "while still floating on the surface of the water began to grow."\textsuperscript{41}

The concept of a floating earth was incorporated into early Buddhism. The \textit{Maha-Parinibbana-Sutra} (c. 300 B.C.) says, "This great earth, Ananda, is established on water. . . ." Another Buddhist sutra says, "On what rests the earth?"--"On the circle of water." Later Hindu thought also conceived of the earth as a floating island.\textsuperscript{42}

We conclude that although early texts are not always explicit, people in the Far East believed the earth was both surrounded by and floating on an ocean. This concept is clearly spelled out in later texts.

2. \textit{The Ancient Near Eastern Belief in a Sea that Surrounds and Supports the Earth-Disc}

In ancient Egypt the primeval ocean was thought to surround the earth and was called the "the great ring" or "great circuit or circle." This


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earth-encircling sea has been directly compared by Egyptologists to the earth-encircling Greek Okeanos. A Victory Hymn for Thutmose III (1490-1436) speaks of him trampling down "the ends of the lands; that which the Ocean encircles...." Similarly a stela of Amenhotep II (1439-1406) in the context of world dominion ("His borders reach the rim of heaven") says, "His portion is that on which Re shines; To him belongs what Ocean encircles." An inscription for Queen Hatshepsut (1486-1469) likewise lays claim to universal dominion saying "the lands were hers, the countries were hers, all that the heavens cover, all that the sea encircles." Finally in the most explicit terms a hymn praising Ptah in the time of Rameses III (1195-1164) says, "who founded the earth ... who surrounded it with Nun, and the sea." 

In addition, Morenz tells us that in the ancient Egyptian cosmology, "The earth rests on or in the primeval ocean." The Egyptologist, John Wilson says, "This platter [the earth] floated in water. There were the abysmal waters below on which the platter rested, called by the Egyptians ‘Nun'." Frankfort says Nun, the primeval ocean, "became Okeanos, surrounding the earth and supporting it.... the earth floats upon Nun." There does not seem to be any question that the Egyptians believed the earth floated on the ocean that surrounds it.

The idea of the earth floating upon Nun is related to the Egyptian concept of a hillock being the first earth to arise out of the primeval ocean: "The huge mound which emerged from Nun at the very beginning. . . ." This primeval hillock was understood to be an island which floated (CT 714).

That the earth was thought to rest on the primeval waters (Nun) is also seen in the Egyptian belief that Nun is the source of the Nile (and all other

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44 *ANET* 3rd ed., 374; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley: University of California, 1976) 2:41; Breasted, *Ancient Records* 2:89 no. 220; 137 no. 325; Breasted, *Ancient Records* 4:163 no. 308; there are also various pictures from ancient Egypt which illustrate the belief in an earth-encircling ocean: see Keel, *The Symbolism*, 38 (fig. 33), 40 (fig. 34), 42 (fig. 38).


earthly waters). One Egyptian text describing the Nile as it gushes forth at its source interchanges the words "Nun" and "Nile": "... the Nile which comes out of both mountains, the Nun, which comes out of the cavern...." Gray displays an Egyptian drawing that shows Nun "emitting the two or four sources of all waters from his mouth." 47

Kramer tells us that the Sumerians conceived of the earth as being surrounded by water. We also know that Babylonian cosmology was heavily indebted to Sumerian concepts, and Babylonian cosmology clearly has a sea around the earth, as mentioned in the epic of Gilgamesh which certainly goes back to Sumerian sources. 48 So, it seems probable that the Sumerians did believe in an earth-surrounding sea.

As to the earth floating on the sea, Lambert tells us that the Sumerians conceived of the earth as a flat disc which overlaid the Apsu [Sumerian, abzu]. Deimel says the Abzu is "the sweet-water abyss in which the earth swims." Jacobsen says the Sumerians imagined the underground waters as a vast subterranean freshwater sea, which they called Abzu or Engur. 49 Albright defines the home of Enki (Ea), that is the Abzu, as "the subterranean fresh-water ocean whence the rivers flow"; and he gives a Sumerian text which he translated in part: "Water which down the pure Euphrates he (Ea) had guided, the product of the abzu ... [Sumerian text, abzu]." 50

The Sumerians then believed that the earth rested on an ocean, a freshwater ocean that was the source of all pools, fountains, marshes and rivers, including the great Euphrates. But being fresh water does not mean that this ocean was not a part of the sea around the earth. As Tsumura pointed out, the Sumerians did not sharply distinguish their concept of water under the earth from their concept of the surrounding sea. The two concepts overlapped so that in Sumerian cosmology, as Pope said, "The sea was conceived as a single body of water." 51 Thus the earth was thought to float on the sea that surrounds it.

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50 Albright, "Mouth of the Rivers," 165, 177-78.

As to Babylonian cosmology, there is evidence that the Babylonians believed in an earth-encircling sea. In a neo-Assyrian version of the Etana Legend, an eagle carries Etana (a king of Kish) up to heaven. As Etana looks down, he comments on how the land and sea appear. He says, "The wide sea is just like a tub," thus indicating that the sea was conceived of as circular in shape or at least encircling the earth.\(^52\)

The Babylonian map of the world called the *Mappa Mundi* clearly shows the flat circular earth surrounded by water called the "Bitter River." All scholars I have seen who discuss this map understand the "Bitter River" to be the earth-encircling ocean.\(^53\)

Since the Babylonians inherited the concepts of the Sumerians, they also believed that the earth floated on an ocean. This is documented in a creation text apparently from Eridu which begins with a primeval sea. To create the earth Marduk constructs a reed raft "on the surface of the waters," then creates dirt and piles it up on the raft.\(^54\) This same picture of the earth spread out over the waters is found in *Enuma elish* where Marduk uses half of the body of Tiamat to construct the earth. Then he opens "the deep" which is obviously below her body and "caused to flow from her eyes the Euphrates (and) Tigris" (5:54,55). (Cf. the Sumerian text cited above where the Euphrates is "the product of the Apsu." ) That Tiamat has water below her is also evidenced by *Enuma elish* 5:56 where Marduk "closed up her nostrils, reserved the water" and in 5:58 where he "drilled fountains in her."\(^55\)

Other Babylonian texts also make reference to rivers coming up from the deep below. The Code of Hammurabi and several sections of the Atrahasis epic mention "floods [rising] from the abyss."\(^56\) In Babylonian thought then, the earth floated on an Ocean, a Deep, an Abyss (*Apsu*). This ocean was spoken of as being as deep under the earth as the sky was high over the earth.\(^57\) Accordingly, it was an inexhaustible source of water for all springs and lakes as well as for mighty rivers like the Tigris and the Euphrates. In addition, this Apsu upon which the earth floated was thought of as the same sea that encircled the earth.\(^58\)

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\(^{54}\) R. Labat, "Les Origines et La Formation de la Terre dans Le Poeme Babylonien de la Creation," *An Bib* 12 (1959) 213; cf. the African story above where iron is placed on the water and earth is spread over it; Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis*, 62.


In summary it is clear that ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians believed that the earth, a flat circular disc, was surrounded by a single circular sea. In addition they believed that the earth floated on this sea and that it was this underlying sea which supplied the water in springs, wells and all rivers including the mighty Nile and Euphrates.

3. The Ancient Western Belief in a Surrounding and Supporting Sea

In Homer (Il 14:200-1; 18:483-607; Od 11:21) the earth-disc is surrounded by Ocean. Bunbury, like other classical scholars, concluded, There can be no doubt that Homer in common with all his successors down to the time of Hecataeus [c. 500 B.C.], believed the earth to be a plane, of circular form, surrounded on all sides by the Ocean ....59

There are also hints in Homer (Il 9:183) that the sea was thought of as upholding the earth. And, just as Babylonians and Egyptians thought of the sea below as the source of springs and rivers, Homer (Il 21:195-7) speaks of the ocean being the source of all seas, rivers, springs and wells.

In summary, we see that all scientifically naive tribal peoples (who bring an ocean into their cosmology), all Eastern peoples and Western thinkers down to the fifth century B.C. believed that the sea was a single circular body of water that surrounded the flat earth. In addition (except for later Western thinkers) all of these peoples believed that the flat earth floated on the sea that surrounded it, and that the underlying sea upon which the earth floated was the source of all springs, wells, and rivers on earth including the great Nile and Euphrates.

IV. The Historico-Grammatical Meaning of "Sea (s)" in Gen 1:10

Being a scientifically naive people, it is probable that like other scientifically naive tribal peoples the Hebrews thought of the earth as being surrounded by a circular sea and floating upon that single surrounding sea. The writer and first readers of Gen 1 also inherited Mesopotamian concepts about the natural world from the patriarchs and no doubt were influenced by Egyptian concepts during their stay in Egypt. Moses, in fact, was "educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22; Exod 2:10). It is highly probable, therefore, that the writer and first readers of Gen 1 defined the sea in the same way that all people in the ancient Near East did, namely, as a single circular body of water in the middle of which the flat earth-disc floated and from which all wells, springs and rivers derived their water.60

59 Bunbury, A History, 33; cf. Aeschylus (c. 450 B.C.) "Ocean who coils his energetic current all round the world" (Prometheus Bound, 148-49).
60 See notes 25 and 26 above.
It is very improbable from a historical point of view that the writer and first readers of Gen 1 defined the sea as a body of water embedded in a planetary globe; and the burden of proof lies on anyone who says they did define it that way since there is no evidence that any one in the ancient world before the fifth century B.C. defined it that way. I conclude, therefore, that only a clear statement from Scripture could overthrow the highly probable historical conclusion that the sea in Gen 1:10 was defined by the writer as a single circular body of water in the middle of which the flat earth-disc floated.

Turning to the grammatical side of our study we find that the "sea(s) (מָיָם, yammim) in Gen 1:10 is the name God gave to the "gathered waters." The "gathered waters," Gen 1:7 and 1:9 tell us are the waters which were "under the firmament" as a result of creating a firmament "in the midst of the waters" (Gen 1:6). "The waters of Gen 1:6 in turn refer back to "the waters" of 1:2, that is the Deep (מְדִים, tehom). The "Deep" (tehom) as is seen in other biblical passages (Ps 104:6; Isa 51:10) and in Semitic cognates (Akkadian, Ugaritic, Eblaite) is a sea. So, the sea of Gen 1:10 is half of the sea of Gen 1:2. That it is half of the sea is the most natural interpretation; and this is confirmed by the parallel in Enuma elish (IV: 137-8) where Tiamat is split in half.61

It seems odd, however, that although the lower sea is gathered into one place (1:9), God names it "seas," plural (1:10). T. L. Fenton was so sure this was contrary to Hebrew usage, he thought the word "one" (דִּקָּה, 'ehad) was not part of the original text.62 He argued that the Israelites would not use a plural for a single body of water.

But, KB lists the same singular meaning, "sea," for the plural of yam as it does for the singular. Further there is good reason to believe that KB is correct. The city of Tyre was located only in the Mediterranean Sea, yet Ezek 27:4 and 28:2 describe the city as being located "in the heart of the seas," plural. Further, the singular yam and the plural yammim are occasionally used almost interchangeably in the OT. Compare Jer 47:7 to Judges 5:17 with regard to the Mediterranean Sea. The phrase, "sand of the sea" (Jer 33:22) also seems interchangeable with "sand of the seas" (Jer 15:8).

In any case, one sea, as Judg 5:17 and Ezek 27:4 and 28:2 in particular show, can be called "seas." Given the fact observed by GKC 124a that "The plural is by no means used in Hebrew solely to express a number of individuals or separate objects, but may also denote them collectively," it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of Hebrew scholars have had no

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61 This is one of the few sections in Enuma elish which we can be sure is a genuine parallel (Lambert, "A New Look," 293).
problem accepting the plural *yammim* in Gen 1:10 as perfectly good Hebrew with the singular meaning "sea."\(^{63}\)

We conclude that the Hebrew text of Gen 1:9 is sound and means that the sea of Gen 1:2, having been divided (Gen 1:6-8) into an upper and lower half, the lower half was gathered together into "one place," which as the historical context shows, is a single circular body of water surrounding the earth-disc.

Further, there is a good reason why this one body of water surrounding the earth is called "sea(s)." It is because like the earth-surrounding Ocean in Homer's cosmology (*Il* 21:195-7) as well as in Pliny's geography (*NH* 2:68:173) and, in fact, in all ancient geography this single body of water surrounding the earth was thought of as connected to all inland seas.\(^{64}\) Hence, it is quite appropriate to call the whole gathered collection "Sea(s)."

Indeed, given the ancient concept of one earth-encircling sea with all of the known seas as inlets off of it, it is difficult to think of a more apt name to describe this single yet many-armed sea than the collective name given to it in Gen 1:9,10--"Sea(s)."

As to the shape of this one collection of seas, various OT references show that the Hebrews conceived of it as circular. Prov 8:27b, speaking of creation, says that Wisdom was present "When he (God) inscribed a circle on the face of the Deep." Job 26:10 similarly says, "He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters as a boundary of light and darkness." Pope, I believe rightly, regards this verse as a parallel to Prov 8:27 and says it refers to the primaeval ocean of Gen 1.\(^{65}\)

The bronze hemispherical (or cylindrical) sea which was set up in the temple courtyard in I Kgs 7:23 also seems to indicate by its shape that the earthly sea was conceived of as circular. For although a circular water container would not be unusual, this basin of water could easily have been called simply a basin or laver, as was the case with the simpler original (Exod 30:18). Instead, it was called a sea (*yam*). This name "sea" for the laver parallels the name of the laver which was set up in Babylonian temples.


\(^{64}\) Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities ("Oceanus," 1119) tells us that Oceanus in Homer signified "an immense stream, which ... circulated around the terraqueous plain, and from which the different seas ran out in the manner of bays. This opinion, which is also that of Eratosthenes, was prevalent even in the time of Herodotus (iv. 360)."

\(^{65}\) Marvin H. Pope, *Job* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965) 184; cf. Babylonian and Egyptian texts which relate the rising and setting of the sun to the sea that surrounds the earth: Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological*, 77: "The upper sea of the setting sun ... the lower sea of the rising sun . . ."; Egyptian Book of the Dead 5739: "I praise thee [the sun] at thy setting in the Deep; Praise to thee who rises from the Deep."
and called *apsu*, the word for the water surrounding and under the earth. Thus A. R. Johnson having mentioned that in the Hebrew cosmology the earth is supported on the cosmic sea said,

Moreover, it seems clear that the "bronz sea" which figured so prominently in the furnishings of Solomon's Temple was intended as a replica of the cosmic sea....

Prov 8:27, Job 26:10 and I Kgs 7:23, thus, testify that when the sea was gathered into one place in Gen 1:9 that one place was conceived of as circular in shape. This biblically derived definition of the "sea" as a single body of water circular in shape is in perfect agreement with its historical context.

The biblical picture of the earth surrounded by a sea seems to be reflected in several different phrases used in Scripture. Rudhardt introduces us to one of those phrases. After noting that in the cosmographies of many people waters "make up a vast expanse, in the middle of which lies the earth, like an island," he goes on to say that these surrounding waters "may be divided into two oceans, on either side of the world. . . ." The phrase which he thereby introduces is "from sea to sea" as found in Ps 72:8 and Zech 9:10b, both of which describe the geographically universal rule of the coming Messiah as being "from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth."

The context of these verses which are clearly speaking of the geographically universal rule of the Messiah over all nations on earth (Ps 72:9-11; Zech 9:10b; Cf. Ps 2:8 and Mic 5:4) implies that the phrase "from sea to sea" is a reference to the "two oceans on either side of the world", which enclose within their grasp the entire earth, the two oceans "in the middle of which lies the earth like an island." The phrase "from sea to sea" refers to two specific bodies of water, but not to these bodies of water just in themselves but as representative parts of the "two oceans on either side of the world." This understanding of the phrase is strengthened by the fact that in Mesopotamia where a universal sea was understood to be surrounding the world, the phrase "from the lower sea to the upper sea" [both understood as parts of the sea surrounding the world] denotes the entire known world.


67 "Water," *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 15, 354; notice that referring to the water around the earth in terms of two oceans is common.

The biblical terms "eastern sea" and "western sea," especially as used in Zech 14:8, where the context is one of apocalyptic universality, also seem to refer to the eastern and western halves of the ocean that surround the earth.69

Finally, there is reason to believe that the yam sup of Scripture is not simply a reference to the Red Sea as we understand that name nor to the more popular "Sea of Reeds." Rather, it is a reference to the yam sop, the "Sea of the End," that is the sea at the end or edge of the earth.70

The biblical data is thus in complete agreement with the historical data that "earth" and "sea(s)" in Gen 1:10 refer to a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disc lying in the middle of a circular sea.

1. The Earth as Floating on the Sea

With regard to the earth floating on the sea, we are in the happy position of having Ps 136:5, 6 and 7 refer back respectively to the events of the second, third and fourth days of creation as recorded in Gen 1. Ps 136:6 is, thus, parallel to Gen 1:10. Harris recognized this but construed Ps 136:6 as referring "to land masses above the shoreline, that surely is all."71

But Harris made no attempt to exegete Ps 136:6 either historically or grammatically. Instead he lifted the Psalm out of its ancient Near Eastern context wherein the earth does float on a sea, set the Psalm down in the context of modern western science and thereby made verse 6 refer to "land masses" when, as we have seen above, the historico-biblical meaning of "earth" is a single land mass. In addition, he ignored the verb "spread out" (raqa') and thereby made verse 6 say simply "the earth is above the waters."

The verb in Ps 136:6, raqa', according to KB can mean "stamp, beat out" (e.g., II Sam 22:43; Ezek 6:11) or "spread out" (e.g., Isa 42:5). The meanings of the verb are derived from working with metals which when beat out, spread out. The meaning "stamp, beat out" for the verb raqa' does not fit the context of Ps 136:6 and virtually no one has attempted to translate it that way in this verse. This leaves the meaning "spread out," which commentators and translators have regularly employed for this verse. We conclude, thus far, that Ps 136:6 should be translated, "[The Lord who] spread out the earth (al) the waters."

The exact relationship of the earth to the waters is expressed by the preposition 'al. The preposition cal usually means "upon" and that is the first meaning given for it in both KB and BDB. Further, the other meanings

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69 See note 65 above.
of ‘al all flow out from the meaning "upon." Thus the first thing BDB says about the preposition ‘al is that its meaning is "upon, and hence ... [then follows a list of its other meanings]." The meaning, "upon," therefore, is an appropriate translation of ‘al in a text like Ps 136:6 where the immediate context does not lead us to any other meaning. The meaning "upon" is also the one most often chosen by modern translators of this verse including the translators of the NIV, even though Harris was a major editor of the NIV. The Hebrew invites this translation, and there is no contextual reason to translate the verse differently.

Unfortunately, the only time the verb raqa’ is used with the preposition ‘al in the OT is in Ps 136:6. But, raqa’ has a close synonym, namely (iii, radad) which also apparently means "beat" or "spread out;" and, this synonym is used with the preposition ‘al in I Kgs 6:32 where it describes overlaying the cherubim with gold plating: "he spread out the gold over or upon (‘al) the cherubim." It seems very probable, therefore, that the synonymous phraseology in Ps 136:6 (especially in the light of Isa 40:19 which uses raqa’ in the sense of "overlay") means that the earth is spread out over or upon the sea. As gold overlays the cherubim in I Kgs 6:32 so the earth overlays the sea in Ps 136:6.72

Ps 24:2 also speaks of the creation of the earth and, hence, is indirectly referring back to Gen 1:10. The Psalm says, God "founded" the earth-continent (לבנה יבש, eres-tebel, v.1) "upon the seas." The word, "upon," is the same Hebrew word, ‘al, as was used in Ps 136:6. Modern scholars of Hebrew regularly translate ‘al in Ps 24:2 as "upon" and so do all English translations that I have seen (KJV, ERV, ASV, NASV, RSV, NEB, Berkeley, Amplified, Moffat, Jerusalem, and NIV)73.

The verb, "found," (יָשַׁד, yasad) which is used in Ps 24:2 means to lay down a foundational base for a building or wall (I Kgs 5:17 [31 ]; 7:10; 16:34; Ezra 3:10-12) or to set something upon a foundational base (Cant 5:15; Ps 104:5). With either meaning the most natural meaning of ‘al would be its primary meaning, "upon." This is confirmed by the three other times that ‘al is used in the OT with the verb "found" (yasad): Cant 5:15; Ps 104:5; Amos 9:6. In all three cases, the meaning, "upon," is demanded by the context. Ps 104:5 especially demands that ‘al be translated "upon" in Ps 24:2 because just like Ps 24:2 it is speaking of the founding of the earth. Ps 24:2 is saying, then, that God "founded," that is, firmly placed the earth upon the seas, the seas being a foundational base. The flat earth-continent is resting on the seas. The word "seas" (yammim) reminds us of

72 Compare the language of the Finno-Ugric and African descriptions of the earth given above (notes 33 and 34); and see the same language used in Satapatha-Brahman 7:4:1:8 in Sacred Books of the East 41, 364.

Gen 1:10b where God called the gathered waters of the tehom "Seas" (yam-mim); and this again tells us, as did Ps 136:6 that Gen 1:10 is saying that the flat earth-continent was founded "upon" (or on top of) the sea, fixed in place but floating on the sea, in exact accord with the historical meaning. The word, "rivers," (ܢܗܪܐ, neharot) in 24:2b is known from Ugaritic to be simply a synonym of seas, and neharot is clearly used to mean seas in Ps 93:3. The word, "rivers," (ܢܗܪܐ, neharot) in 24:2b is known from Ugaritic to be simply a synonym of seas, and neharot is clearly used to mean seas in Ps 93:3.74

The picture given to us in Ps 24:2 and 136:6 is quite clear; but there is still more biblical evidence that the earth was thought to float on the sea. For just as the sea below the earth was thought of in the rest of the ancient Near East as an inexhaustible source of water for springs, wells and rivers, so it is in the OT. In the blessings of Joseph first by Jacob (Gen 49:25 [MT 24]) and later by Moses (Deut 33:13) there is a reference to the "deep sea (tehom) lying below" as the source of spring and/or river water for farming.

Gen 49:25(24) speaks simply of the "blessings of the heaven above; blessings of the deep sea (tehom) lying below." Deut 33:13 speaks more fully of Jehovah blessing the land of Joseph "with the precious dew of the heavens and with the deep sea (tehom) lying below." Harris tried to make Gen 49:25 refer simply to the fact that seas like the Mediterranean are lower in level than the land masses.75

The context of Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13, however, has to do with fruitfulness (Gen 49:22, 25), especially agricultural fruitfulness (Deut 33:13-16). The "dew from the heavens above" was a prime source of the water necessary to make agriculture flourish (Gen 27:28; I Kgs 17:1; Hos 14:5; Zech 8:12); so the context implies that the blessing of "the deep sea that lies below" was also to make agriculture flourish (cf. Ezek 31:4). The question is then, were seas like the Mediterranean Sea a source of water to make agriculture flourish? Being salt water, the answer is, of course, no; and even if we force the text to refer to a small fresh water sea like the sea of Galilee, the answer is still, no. Harris's interpretation of the "sea that lies below" in Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13 is clearly out of context-both historical and biblical. In context both verses are clear references to a sea (tehom) below the earth. So these verses show us again that the earth was understood in the OT to be floating upon a sea, from which, as in all ancient Near Eastern thought, springs, wells and rivers derived their water.

There is yet another reason why we know Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13 refer to a sea below the earth: it was customary in the ancient Near East to pair

references to fertilizing water from above with references to fertilizing water from the sea below the earth. In the Akkadian Atrahasis epic D: 4:54,55, for example, we read,

Above Adad made scarce his rain
Below was dammed up the flood,
So that it rose not from its source.76

In the Ugaritic Aqhat C: 1: 45, 46, we read,

No dew. No rain.
No welling up of the Deep77

In Weinfeld's instructive paper there are more examples and discussion of this ancient Near Eastern pairing of references to water from above with references to water from the deep sea below the earth.78 Since there is no question that the paired ancient Near Eastern references are references to the sea beneath the earth, it is most probable that when such pairing occurs in the OT, the references are also to the sea beneath the earth. This confirms that Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13 are referring to the sea beneath the earth.
Gen 49:25 and Deut 33:13 lead us to the realization that other biblical references to water below are also references to the sea beneath the earth. For example, in Gen 2:5,6 where the 'ed-water from below is contrasted with no rain from above, we believe that Tsumura rightly concluded, "Since the 'ed-water flooded out of the subterranean water in Gen 2:6, in this regard it is related to the tehom(ot)-water, the water of the subterranean ocean."79

We see the same thing in Gen 7:11 and 8:2 where the water for Noah's flood is described as coming both from above and from "all the springs of the great deep (tehom)." The great tehom is, of course, the sea mentioned in Gen 1:10 which was half of the original tehom mentioned in Gen 1:2. It has been suggested that "the springs of the great deep" in Gen 7:11 simply refer to the springs of the visible sea, not to earthly springs from a sea below the earth.80 But, this interpretation removes the verse from its historical context wherein the phrase "springs of the great deep" would be understood as inland earthly springs. This suggestion also overlooks the fact that the pairing of this phrase with reference to the waters from above indicates biblically (Gen 49:25; Deut 33:13) as well as historically that the reference is to the earthly fresh-water springs that come up from the sea that was believed to exist below the earth. Earthly fresh-water springs were, in fact,
so closely linked in people's minds with the great to **tehom** below the earth (Gen 49:25: Deut 33:13) that the earthly springs were themselves sometimes called **tehom** (Ezek 31:4) or **tehomot** (Deut 8:7). In context—both historical and biblical—Gen 7:11 is speaking of the water for Noah's flood not only pouring down from above, but, as Wenham put it, "water gushing forth uncontrollably from wells and springs which draw from a great subterranean ocean ("the great deep")."  

Prov 3:20, another verse that pairs water from above (in the form of dew) with water from below, parallels Gen 7:11's reference to the water from below grammatically for it uses the same verb (יָרְבָא, baqa') to speak of splitting open the springs as was used in Gen 7:11. In addition, the springs in Prov 3:20 are called **tehomot** which parallels the description of springs in Gen 7:11 where they are called "springs of the great **tehom**." The springs of Prov 3:20 are thus identified with the springs of Gen 7:11. Since the springs mentioned in Prov 3:20 are in a context of agricultural blessing (paired with "dew"), they must be earthly fresh-water springs. Prov 3:20 thus shows us that the springs of Gen 7:11 are also earthly fresh-water springs and reciprocally Gen 7:11 shows us that the fresh-water springs (**tehomot**) of Prov 3:20 were fed by the great **tehom** (sea) of Gen 7:11. The grammar, the historical context, and the fact that the pairing of water from above with water from below regularly refers the water from below to the sea beneath the earth, makes this interpretation sure. Scott, therefore, correctly comments on Prov 3:20: "An echo of Gen vii 11 where the water which submerged the world in the days of Noah is said to have surged up like a tide from the subterranean ocean and fallen from sluices in the sky."  

Gen 2:5, 6; 7:11; 8:2; Prov 3:20 (and II Sam 1:21 as emended by Gordis) all make reference to earthly fresh-water springs having their water supplied by a sea (**tehom**) beneath the earth. These verses all thus indicate that the earth in Gen 1:10 was understood to be resting on a sea.

In conclusion, according to Pss 24:2 and 136:6, the earth of Gen 1:10 was founded upon the sea, spread out upon the sea. The earth of Gen 1:10 is, thus, a flat earth-continent floating upon the sea. Gen 49:25 (MT 24) and Deut 33:13 speak of a **tehom**, a deep sea, lying below the earth; so, they also testify that the earth was conceived of as floating upon a sea, a subterranean sea which served as the source of water for springs, wells and rivers just as was believed by everyone in the ancient Near East. Various other OT references confirm still further that the earth in Gen 1:10 was conceived of as floating on a sea.

In conclusion, we see that when Gen 1 is interpreted within its biblical context, the "earth" and the "sea(s)" of Gen 1:10 do not refer to the

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continents and oceans on a planetary globe for there is no contextual basis—either historical or biblical—to see a planetary globe in Gen 1. Rather, the historico-grammatical meaning of "earth" and "sea(s)" in Gen 1:10 is that the earth is a single continent in the shape of a flat circular disk floating in the middle of a circular sea, which sea was thought to be the source of water for earthly springs, wells and rivers.

V. Post Script

One might ask the question, does interpreting Gen 1:9, 10 as well as 49:25 (24); Deut 33:13; Pss 24:2 and 136:6 and others according to their historico-grammatical meaning impinge negatively on the biblical doctrine of inspiration? I think not. The biblical references to a flat earth-disc floating in a circular surrounding sea are simply references to the ordinary opinions of the writer's day and a fulfillment as it were of the words of B. B. Warfield, who, as he defined biblical inerrancy, said that an inspired writer could (italics ours)

share the ordinary opinions of his day in certain matters lying outside the scope of his teachings, as, for example, with reference to the form of the earth, or its relation to the sun [or, mutatis mutandis, its relation to the sea]; and, it is not inconceivable that the form of his language when incidentally adverting to such matters, might occasionally play into the hands of such a presumption.84

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84 Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, "The Real Problem of Inspiration" in The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1948) 166-67; cf. Calvin's comments on Ps 72:8 with regard to the geographical extent of the kingdom of Christ on earth being described in Scripture as of significantly less geographical size than is actually the case: "... David obviously accommodates his language to his own time. .." (Commentary on the Book of Psalms Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 3:109.

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THE FIRMAMENT AND THE WATER ABOVE
Part I: The Meaning of raqia in Gen 1:6-8

PAUL H. SEELY

STANDARD Hebrew lexica and a number of modern biblical scholars have defined the raqia (יִרְקַיָּא, "firmament") of Gen 1:6-8 as a solid dome over the earth.1 Conservative scholars from Calvin on down to the present, however, have defined it as an atmospheric expanse.2 Some conservatives have taken special pains to reject the concept of a solid dome on the basis that the Bible also refers to the heavens as a tent or curtain and that references to windows and pillars of heaven are obviously poetic.3 The word raqia, they say, simply means "expanse." They say the understanding of raqia as a solid firmament rests on the Vulgate's translation, firmamentum; and that translation rests in turn on the LXX's translation στέρεωμα, which simply reflected the Greek view of the heavens at the time the translators did their work.4 The raqia defined as an atmospheric expanse is the historical view according to modern conservatives; and the modern view of the raqia as a solid dome is simply the result of forcing biblical poetic language into agreement with a concept found in the Babylonian epic Enuma Elish.5

The historical evidence, however, which we will set forth in concrete detail, shows that the raqia was originally conceived of as being solid and not a merely atmospheric expanse. The grammatical evidence from the OT, which we shall examine later, reflects and confirms this conception of

5 Kaiser. Literary Form. 52-57.
solidity. The basic historical fact that defines the meaning of *raqi帷* in Genesis 1 is simply this: all peoples in the ancient world thought of the sky as solid. This concept did not begin with the Greeks.

The question, however, arises in the modern mind, schooled as it is in the almost infinite nature of sky and space: Did scientifically naive peoples really believe in a solid sky, or were they just employing a mythological or poetic concept? Or were they, perhaps, just using phenomenal language with no attending belief that the sky actually was a solid object? That is, were they referring to the mere appearance of the sky as a solid dome but able to distinguish between that appearance and the reality?

The answer to these questions, as we shall see more clearly below, is that scientifically naive peoples employed their concept of a solid sky in their mythology, but that they nevertheless thought of the solid sky as an integral part of their physical universe. And it is precisely because ancient peoples were scientifically naive that they did not distinguish between the appearance of the sky and their scientific concept of the sky. They had no reason to doubt what their eyes told them was true, namely, that the stars above them were fixed in a solid dome and that the sky literally touched the earth at the horizon. So, they equated appearance with reality and concluded that the sky must be a solid physical part of the universe just as much as the earth itself.

Levy-Bruhl, commenting on the beliefs of scientifically naive peoples and quoting from original reports, wrote,

> Their cosmography as far as we know anything about it, was practically of one type up 'til the time of the white man's arrival upon the scene. That of the Borneo Dayaks may furnish us with some idea of it. "They... consider the earth to be a flat surface, whilst the heavens are a dome, a kind of glass shade which covers the earth, and comes in contact with it at the horizon. They therefore believe that, traveling straight on, always in the same direction, one comes at last, without any metaphor, to touch the sky with one's fingers."... It is the same thing in the Mortlock Islands. "... in reply to our question as to what land lay beyond these islands, the native drew a line to the west of them and explained in a very clear and simple way that yonder, beyond the Paloas Islands, the dome of the sky was too close to the earth to permit navigation; the utmost that could be done was to crawl along the ground or swim in the sea."... Among the Melanesians of the Loyalty Group, "to the mind of the Lifuan, the horizon was a tangible object at no great distance. Many of the natives thought that if they could only reach it they would be able to climb up to the sky."

Such an impression is not peculiar to the races of the Southern Pacific. It is to be met with in South Africa. "Heaven is for them (the Thonga) an immense solid vault which rests upon the earth. The point where heaven touches the earth is called *bugimamusi*... the place where the women can lean their pestles against the vault."6

Among primitive African peoples various stories reflect their belief in a solid sky. The Ngombe say that when the two creatures who hold the sky up with poles get tired, "the sky will fall down." The Nyimang say that long ago the sky was so close to earth that the women could not stir their porridge properly with their long stirrers; so one day "one woman got angry and lifting the stirrer pierced the sky with the upper end."7

The Dogon tell of an ancient ancestor who came down from heaven "standing on a square piece of heaven. . . . A thick piece? Yes, as thick as a house. It was ten cubits high with stairs on each side facing the four cardinal points."8

On the other side of the world, among American Indians, the sky was also conceived of as a solid dome. As Levy-Bruhl wrote,

In North America, in Indian belief, the earth is a circular disc usually surrounded on all sides by water and the sky is a solid concave hemisphere coming down at the horizon to the level of the earth. In Cherokee and other Indian myths the sky is continually lifting up and coming down again to the earth like the upper blade of a pair of scissors. The sun which lives outside the hemisphere slips between the earth and the sky-line in the morning when there is a momentary slit, and it returns from the Western side in the evening in the same fashion.9

This idea of the sky lifting up and down, opening and closing a space "between the rim of the sky and the earth" is widespread among North American Indians, some of them believing that this bellows-like movement of the sky caused wind. A number of Siberian tribes believe the opening of the sky allows migratory birds to fly out of this world in the winter and live "on the other side of the celestial vault" until spring. But birds which do not hurry "are caught and crushed between the rocks of the sky and the earth" when the sky closes down.10

Another common American Indian idea reflecting the solidity of the sky is the story of a hero who gained access to the sky by shooting an arrow into it and then another arrow into the first arrow and so on until he had an arrow "ladder" by which he could climb up to the sky. There are similar stories to this from all around the world. In a Chuckchee story a hero throws a needle upwards "as a dart, so that it fastens in the sky"; then he climbs up a thread hanging from the needle. In Australia it is not an arrow or a needle, but a lance that "fastens itself in the celestial vault."11

Still another element reflecting the solidity of the sky is the idea of a window or hole in the sky. This idea is so widespread that one observer

concluded it was "a general human trait." The Seneca, for example, told of a woman who fell through a hole in the sky bringing some soil of the sky with her which she had clenched in her hands while trying "to hold on to the edge of the hole" before she fell. The Navaho in their story of creation not only mention a hole in the sky but specifically describe the solidity of the sky:

They went in circles upward 'til they reached the sky. It was smooth. [They were told of a hole in the sky.] They entered the hole and went through it up to the surface [of the second world above]. When they reached the sky [of the second world] they found it like the sky of the first world, smooth and hard with no opening.

The Cherokee clearly state that the "sky vault . . . is of solid rock." In the far northern reaches of Europe and the Soviet Union the primitive peoples there also give evidence of belief in a solid sky. The Lapps say that the North Star is a nail which supports the sky, but in the last days when Arcturus shoots down the North Star with an arrow "the heavens will fall crushing the earth and setting fire to everything."

In Siberia the Yakuts say the outer edge of the earth touches the rim of a hemi-spherical sky and that "a certain hero rode out once to the place where earth and sky touched." In some districts the Buriats "conceive the sky to be shaped like a great overturned cauldron, rising and falling in constant motion. In rising, an opening forms between the sky and the edge of the earth. A hero who happened at such a time to place his arrow between the edge of the earth and the rim of the sky was enabled thus to penetrate outside the world."

Other stories could be cited, but it is sufficiently clear that scientifically naive peoples around the world from the Pacific Islands to North America, from Siberia to Africa, have perceived the sky as a solid inverted bowl touching the earth at the horizon. Nor is this common conception of a firmament merely myth, metaphor, or phenomenal language. It is an integral part of their scientific view of the universe. It is within the context

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 C. Long, Alpha: The Myths of Creation (Chico: Scholars Press, 1963) 46-48. Sproul (Primal) also mentions an Islamic commentary which tells of boring "a hole in the sky" and an Eskimo story of a bird which pecks "a hole in the sky."
16 U. Holmberg, The Mythology of All Races. Vol. 4: Finno-Ugric, Siberia (repr. New York: Cooper Square, 1964) 221-22. Cf. the Aztec story of the sky falling down from a violent rain, in Hatt, Asiatic, 50. The Koran speaks of God holding up the heavens "so that they do not fall on to the earth" (22.64).
17 Hatt, Asiatic, 63.
18 Holmberg, Mythology, 308.
of geography, astronomy, and natural science that they really believe that if they would travel far enough they could "touch the sky with one's fingers," that migrating birds live "on the other side of the celestial vault," that an arrow or lance could "fasten in the sky," that the sky can have "a hole in it," that at the horizon "the dome of the sky is too close to earth to permit navigation," that where the sky touches the earth you can "lean a pestle against it" or "climb up it," that the sky is "smooth and hard... of solid rock, ... as thick as a house," that the sky can "fall down" and someday "will fall down crushing the earth."

Equally important, this perception of the firmament is not selective. It is almost completely universal. True, there are occasional variations on the solid dome conception, such as several worlds piled up on top of each other, each with its own firmament; but I know of no evidence that any scientifically naive people anywhere on earth believed that the firmament was just empty space or atmosphere. The only exception to this is the Chinese and that not until AD 200. Apart from a scientific education, it is just too natural for people to think of the sky as something solid. So true is this that it is generally regarded by scholars as "the usual primitive conception." One scholar goes so far as to call it "a general human belief."

1. The Ancient Eastern View of the Sky

Since scientifically naive peoples naturally conceive of the sky as solid, it is no surprise that the records we have from the ancient East echo the same viewpoint. Thus one observer of ancient Japan reports that the sky was thought of as "an actual place, not more ethereal than the earth... but a high plane situated above Japan and communicating with Japan by a bridge or ladder. ... An arrow shot from earth could reach heaven and make a hole in it."

Joseph Needham tells us the Chinese had three cosmological views, but the most ancient one perceived the earth as an upside down bowl with the heavens over it as another upside down bowl, the sky having simply a greater diameter than the earth. The sun and moon were attached to the vault of heaven, which rotated from left to right carrying the heavenly bodies with it. Chinese stories mention heaven and earth being separated from each other, tell us that the sky was once much nearer to earth than it

21 Ib., 54 n. 2.
is today, and speak of the place "where heaven and earth meet," ideas which, if interpreted within their historical context, indicate they believed in a solid sky.23

Interestingly, around AD 200 a school of thought arose in China that posited that the sky was empty space. This is to my knowledge the first and only time that anyone in the ancient Eastern world thought of the sky as not being solid. So novel was this idea even to the West that as late as the sixteenth century a Jesuit missionary to China wrote home saying the idea that the sky is not solid is "one of the absurdities of the Chinese"!24

In India the earliest cosmology is found in the Rig Veda, a document from the middle of the second millennium BC. It contains a number of passages which show that Indians of that time believed in a solid firmament. In one creation hymn an unnamed god is mentioned "by whom the dome of the sky was propped up" (10.121.5; cf. 1.154.1 and 2.12.2). Another hymn asks, "What was the wood... from which they carved the sky and the earth?" (10.81.4). Another says, "Firm is the sky and firm is the earth" (10.173.4). Several hymns mention people who "climb up to the sky" (8.14.14; 2.12.12; 1.85.7). Several hymns mention the separation of heaven and earth. One says Varona "pushed away the dome of the sky" (7.86.1; cf. 10.82.1).25

Equally important, the hymns of the Rig Veda distinguish the firmament from the "middle realm of space," i.e., the space between the earth and the firmament (10.190.3; 8.14.7). Indeed, the "realm of space" and the "sky" were created from two different sources (10.90.14). The atmosphere is also distinguished from the solid firmament (2.12.2; 10.139).26 As W. N. Brown concluded, the universe of the Rig Veda "was considered to be composed of the earth surface, the atmospheric region, and the sky surface."27

The Sumerologist Samuel Noah Kramer described the cosmology of the Sumerians, the founders of the first civilization, in similar terms. The earth, they thought, was a flat disc; heaven, a hollow sphere enclosed at top and bottom by a solid surface in the shape of a vault.28 Sumerian literature, like the Rig Veda, distinguished between the firmament and the atmosphere. The Sumerians made this distinction by attributing to their air god, Enlil, the original act of separating heaven from earth. Hence Kramer noted the Sumerians believed that between heaven and earth was a substance called *lil* or wind which "corresponds roughly to our 'atmosphere,' " while they

thought of the firmament as solid, possibly composed of tin since the Sumerian word for tin is literally "metal of heaven."\textsuperscript{29}

We have no description of the Hittite cosmology, but we do know they thought of the sky as solid, for a recovered text speaks of a time when they "severed the heaven from the earth with a cleaver."\textsuperscript{30}

The Egyptian Pyramid Texts (ca. 2000 BC) seem to speak of the sky as being made of metal.\textsuperscript{31} Max Muller accepted this idea and went on to say the Egyptians apparently believed the firmament was made specifically of iron. He says, "This conception of a metal dome explains some expressions of later times, such as the name of iron, be-ni-pet ('sky metal'), or the later word for 'thunder,' khru-bai (literally, 'sound of the metal') i.e., thunder was evidently explained as the beating of the giant sheets of metal which constituted the sky."\textsuperscript{32}

Whatever the case may be as to exactly what material the ancient Egyptians thought the sky was made of, they certainly believed it was solid. A number of texts speak of the time when the sky was literally separated from the earth. Pyramid Text 1208c specifically mentions the time "when the sky was separated from the earth," and, although this was a historic event of creation, Text 854c seems to imply that the sky was separated from the earth daily in order to let the sun enter (a concept reminiscent of American Indian ideas).

Text 1156c mentions that "his (Shu's) right arm supports the sky"; and 2013a says, "Thou art a god who supports the sky."\textsuperscript{33} Various of the Coffin Texts (ca. 2050 to 1800 BC) reiterate these ideas of the sky needing support, e.g., spells 160, 366, 378, and 664. Pyramid Text 1040c more prosaically points to the two mountain ranges on the east and west sides of the Nile as the "two supports of the sky." In either case the fact that the sky needed supporting clearly shows that the Egyptians thought of it as solid; and Text 299a implies that if the supporting arms of Shu were hacked off, the sky would fall. Also clearly showing that the Egyptians thought of the sky as solid is the fact that they like the Sumerians and Indians in the Rig Veda distinguished between the sky (firmament) and the atmosphere. The sky

\textsuperscript{30} \textit{ANET}, 125.
\textsuperscript{33} Cf. \textit{ANET}; 33 n. 2. The Deir el-Bahri papyrus picture can be seen in \textit{IDB} 2.57.
was personified by one goddess, Nut, while the air which upheld the sky was
personified by an entirely different deity, Shu.\(^3\)

In Babylonian thought the solidity of the firmament is most clearly seen
in Tablet IV of Enuma Elish, particularly in lines 137-38 where Marduk,
having killed Tiamat, "split her in half like a shellfish, and from one half
made and covered the heavens." Or, as Heidel translated the passage, with
half of Tiamat Marduk "formed the sky as a roof."\(^3\) The solidity of the sky
is also seen in Tablet V:9-11 where Marduk "opened gates on both sides"
so that the sun could pass through morning and evening; and then "In her
belly he placed the zenith" (i.e., the Pole star).\(^3\)

This brings us to the historical meaning of \textit{raqia} in Genesis 1. Everyone
agrees that \textit{raqia} means "sky," but modern conservatives deny the meaning
"solid sky" or "literal firmament." But on what basis can it be denied
that the Hebrews believed the sky was solid? Scientifically naive peoples
everywhere have believed the sky was solid, and there is no reason to believe
the Hebrews were any less scientifically naive than their neighbors. Since,
from a cultural standpoint, the Hebrews' pre-Solomonic architecture and
pottery were "vastly inferior" to that of their neighbors, one might gather
that the early Hebrews were possibly more scientifically naive than their
neighbors, but certainly not less so.\(^3\) Similarly, the fact that it was not the
Hebrews but their neighbors who led the technological advance from the
use of bronze to the use of iron (cf. Josh 17:18; Judg 1:19) suggests, if
anything, that the Hebrews were more scientifically naive than their neigh-
Bors. It certainly does not suggest that they were less so. Nor do we know
of any evidence from biblical times that suggests the Hebrews were ever
more scientifically sophisticated than their neighbors.\(^3\) Accordingly, it
seems most probable that so far as the physical nature of the sky is con-
cerned, the Hebrews, as a typical scientifically naive people, believed the
\textit{raqia} was solid.

The voice of the past would also have had a strong influence upon the
thinking of the Hebrews as it has on all peoples and especially ancient
peoples for whom the voice of the past was the voice of authority. For the

Baltimore: Penguin, 1963) 55. For texts speaking of the sky being "separated" from the earth
and "supported" see Mercer, \textit{The Pyramid Texts}, 299a, 854c, 952d, 1040c, 1101c, 1156c, 1208c,
1528a, 1778b, 2013a, 2091a; and R. O. Faulkner, \textit{The Ancient Egyptian Coffin Texts} (3 vols.;
a statue of Shu separating and supponing the sky, see \textit{ANE}, 183-84, and E. Hornung,
and n. 36.

\(^3\) A. Heidel, \textit{The Babylonian Genesis} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) 42.
\(^3\) \textit{ANE}; 67. B. Landsberger and J. V. K. Wilson, "The Fifth Tablet of Enuma Elish,"
Hebrews the voice of the past was the voice of the patriarchs and Abraham in particular, men who most likely held the Babylonian view of the sky as solid. The Babylonian background of Genesis 1-11 can scarcely be missed, and if one were to date that background it appears to come from the time of the patriarchs. 

Taken within its historical context, then, the probability again is that the raqia in Genesis 1 was understood to be solid. At the same time Egyptian influence should not be totally disregarded. Not only did the Hebrews spend several centuries in Egypt, but Moses, through whom much of the higher theology came (and who wrote Genesis 1 according to conservative thought), was schooled in the thinking of the Egyptians. That schooling would certainly have included the assumption that the sky was solid, a belief that forty years of living with a primitive tribe (according to Exod 2:15) would only have strengthened. And, of course, the Hebrews had a continuing relationship with Egypt throughout their history. With this Egyptian background in mind we must again say that probably the raqia of Genesis 1 should be defined as solid.

It is true that Genesis 1 is free of the mythological and polytheistic religious concepts of the ancient Near East. Indeed it may well be anti-mythological. But, as Bruce Waltke noted when commenting on the higher theology of Israel as it is found in Genesis 1, the religious knowledge of Israel stands in contrast to Israel's scientific knowledge. In addition, the religious knowledge of Israel, though clearly superior to that of its neighbors, was expressed through the religious cultural forms of the time. Temple, priesthood, and sacrifices, for example, were common to all ancient Near Eastern religions. It should not surprise us then to find the religious knowledge of Israel also being expressed through the merely scientific forms of the time.

Considering that the Hebrews were a scientifically naive people who would accordingly believe the raqia was solid, that both their Babylonian and their Egyptian background would influence them to believe the raqia was solid, and that they naturally accepted the concepts of the peoples around them so long as they were not theologically offensive, I believe we have every reason to think that both the writer and original readers of Genesis 1 believed the raqia was solid. The historical meaning of raqia in Gen 1:6-8 is, accordingly, "a solid sky."


40 Hoffmeier, Some Thoughts, 45. cr. C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11 (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 22-47.

41 B. Waltke, Creation and Chaos (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974) 46.


Only by taking Genesis 1 out of its historical context could one say that *raqia* means merely "an atmospheric expanse" or, as the more sophisticated conservatives say, "just phenomenal language." In the ancient world the sky was not just phenomenal. The ancients did not just refer to the appearance of the sky as being solid. They concluded from the appearance that the sky really was solid, and they then employed this conclusion in their thinking about astronomy, geography, and natural science. The *raqia* was for them a literal physical part of the universe, just as solid as the earth itself. Solidity is an integral part of its historical meaning.

When the original readers of Genesis 1 read the word *raqia* they thought of a solid sky. And so did virtually everyone else up to the time of the Renaissance! After the time of Christ there were occasional dissenters, but by and large Jews and Christians, Greeks and barbarians all believed the firmament was solid.

Jews speculated as to what material the firmament was made of: clay or copper or iron (3 *Apoc. Bar.* 3.7). They differentiated between the firmament and the empty space or air between it and the earth (*Gen. Rab.* 4.3.a; 2 *Apoc. Bar.* 21.4). They tried to figure out how thick it was by employing biblical interpretation (*Gen. Rab.* 4.5.2). Most telling they even tried to calculate scientifically the thickness of the firmament (*Pesab.* 49a).

Christians speculated as to whether it was made of earth, air, fire, or water (the basic elements of Greek science). Origen called the firmament "without doubt firm and solid" (*First Homily on Genesis*, FC 71). Ambrose, commenting on Gen 1:6, said, "the specific solidity of this exterior firmament is meant" (*Hexameron*, FC 42.60). Augustine said the word firmament was used "to indicate not that it is motionless but that it is solid and that it constitutes an impassable boundary between the waters above and the waters below" (*The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, ACW 41.1.61).

Greeks from Anaximenes to Aristotle set forth as scientific fact that the firmament was made of a crystalline substance to which "the stars are fixed like nails."44 This idea was passed on for centuries via Ptolemy's *Almagest*. The barbarians meanwhile worried about the sky falling on them if they did not keep their promises!45

Astonishing as it may seem to the modern mind, with very rare exceptions the idea that the sky is not solid is a distinctly modern one. Historical evidence shows that virtually everyone in the ancient world believed in a solid firmament. Accordingly it is highly probable that the historical meaning of *raqia* in Genesis 1 is a solid firmament. Certainly anyone denying the solidity of the *raqia* in Genesis 1 bears a heavy burden of proof. It seems to me that nothing short of a clear statement to the contrary made by an OT writer could allow one in good conscience to set aside this clear historical meaning.

II. The Biblical-Grammatical Meaning of raqı'āc

Does any statement or phrase appear in the OT which clearly states or implies that the raqı'āc is not solid? Does anything in Genesis 1 state or imply the raqı'āc was not (or was) solid? The fact that it was named "heaven(s)" in Gen 1:8 and birds fly in the heaven(s) (Deut 4:17) seems to imply the raqı'āc was not solid. But the word samayim (heaven[s]) is broader in meaning than raqı'āc. It encompasses not only the raqı'āc (v. 8; Ps 19:6; 148:4) but the space above the raqı'āc (Ps 2:4; 11:4; 139:8) as well as the space below (Ps 8:8; 79:2). Hence birds fly in the heavens, but never in the raqı'āc. Rather, birds fly upon the face or in front of the raqı'āc (Gen 1:20).

This phrase upon the face (surface) or in front of the raqı'āc is important in that it implies the raqı'āc was neither space nor atmosphere. For birds do not fly upon the surface or in front of space or air, but rather in space or air. This distinction is illustrated in the case of fish, which no one would say swim upon the surface or in front of the water (Gen 7:18) but rather in the water (cr. Exod 7:18, 21).

Gen 1:17 also testifies that the raqı'āc is not air or atmosphere for it says that God placed the stars (and probably the sun and moon) "in the raqı'āc or the heavens." But the stars are not located in the air or atmosphere. So we know the raqı'āc (in which 1:17 locates them) cannot be air or atmosphere. Even if 1:17 is construed as phenomenal language, the raqı'āc still cannot be air or atmosphere. For the stars do not look like they are located in the air or atmosphere. Rather (as anyone can tell on a clear night away from city lights) they look like they are embedded in a solid vault which is exactly why scientifically naive peoples believe in a solid vault, and why 1:17, in accordance with that belief, says God placed the stars in the raqı'āc. Gen 1:14-17 is such a clear proof that the raqı'āc is not air or atmosphere that some conservatives have tried to dissociate the raqı'āc in vv. 14-17 from the raqı'āc in vv. 6-8. But the statement in v. 14, "Let there be lights in the firmament or heaven," immediately raises the question, What "firmament of heaven"? To which the context immediately replies, the firmament of vv. 6-8 which was called heaven. The contextual identity of the two firmaments is really beyond question. Taken in context it is impossible to say the raqı'āc of vv. 6-8 was just air or atmosphere.

On the contrary. For when God divided the light from the darkness (two intangibles) nothing was made. But in order to divide the tangible upper ocean from the lower ocean the raqı'āc was made (ḥesed). The combination or dividing two tangibles (as opposed to intangibles) with something that was made (ḥesed), a verb which often means "manufacture," implies a tangible, i.e., solid divider. It would be unnatural to use ḥesed to say that God made space. Nor is it a particularly apt word for saying God made air. If a nonsolid divider had been in mind for separating the primeval ocean, the idea could have been communicated in a much more natural way. It could have been simply said that God put room (makhāmim) or space (ḥor) as in Gen.
32:16 (17), or *space* ( Heb) as in Josh 3:4, between the two bodies of water. If air (a word never appearing in the OT) had been in mind as the divider, \(\text{ח} \) ("wind") could have been used, as in Exod 14:21, or \(\text{擤} \) ("breath") as in Gen 2:7; Ps 150:6.

If the writer wanted to communicate the idea of a nonsolid divider, his choice of the word *raqia\(^c\)" was particularly unfortunate since its verbal cognate *raqac\(^c\)" ("stamp, beat, spread out") is used of hammering metal into thin plates (Exod 39:3) and hence suggests that a *raqia\(^c\)" was something hammered out, an idea consonant with both Egyptian and Sumerian views of the sky. In addition a Phoenician cognate (mrq\(^c\)) means "plating."\(^{46}\)

Conservative writers usually try to avoid this implication of solidity by stressing the meaning "expanse" or "thinness" for *raqia\(^c\)" and pointing out that Isaiah also speaks of the sky as a curtain or tent (Isa 40:22) or scroll (Isa 34:4). But in Isa 42:5 the earth is called an "expanse" (raqia\(^c\)) without in any way implying that it is not solid. So even if the *raqia\(^c\)" in Genesis is translated "expanse," this in no way implies that it is not solid. And even though gold can be beaten very thin, it never loses its solidity.

As for Isaiah, he never says God made a curtain or tent or scroll as Genesis says God made a *raqia\(^c\)". Rather he says the sky is like a curtain or tent or scroll. His statements are always poetic similes, but Gen 1:7 is not a simile (nor is it just phenomenal language). Gen 1:7 makes a prosaic statement about the creation of a part of the universe, a part just as physical as the earth, sea, sun, or moon. The statements in Genesis and Isaiah are not really comparable.

We see then that Gen 1:17 and 1:20 testify that the *raqia\(^c\)" is not air or atmosphere. The verbal cognate of *raqia\(^c\)" as well as the use of the verb \(\text{מ} \) ("made"), in 1:7 imply the *raqia\(^c\)" was solid. More important, the purpose and function of the *raqia\(^c\)" imply its solidity, for it functions as a horizontal dam (cf. 7:11; 8:2; Ps 148:4), holding back a mighty heavenly ocean. The water above the firmament is not clouds as some rationalize (and we shall delineate this fact more fully in Part II), for while the sun, moon, and stars are in the *raqia\(^c\)" (v. 14), the waters of the upper primeval ocean are above the *raqia\(^c\)" (v. 7).\(^{47}\) This ocean over the *raqia\(^c\)" indeed resting upon it (Gen 7:11; 8:2; Ps 148:4), tells us quite clearly that the firmament is a physical part of the universe. It is not just phenomenal language as it might have been if Genesis were a modern Western book. Rather it is an ancient Near Eastern concept similar to if not related to that found in Enuma Elish Tablets IV and V.

As for the rest of the OT, the word *raqia\(^c\)" is used a number of times but usually in contexts that do not help us define the word any further than saying it means "sky." But in Ezekiel 1 the nature of a firmament is described. This is the clearest description of a *raqia\(^c\)" found in the OT. It was


\(^{47}\) Ibid.
a divider of some kind over the heads of four cherubim (vv. 22-25), and on top of it was a throne with a man on it (v. 26). As to the composition of this firmament, it looked like "terrible crystal or ice."

Inasmuch as the throne mentioned was apparently sitting on this firmament (cf. Exod 24:10) and the firmament looked like crystal or ice, it is apparent that the firmament is solid and is certainly not mere atmosphere or space or simply phenomenal language. Nor does anyone to my knowledge doubt that it was solid. Even conservatives admit the firmament in Ezekiel 1 is solid. Having then this clear definition of a raqia\(^{\circ}\) as a solid divider, one is hermeneutically bound to interpret the raqia\(^{\circ}\) in Genesis as solid unless there is some clear reason to differentiate the one from the other. As it turns out there is no reason to differentiate the raqia\(^{\circ}\) in Ezekiel 1 from the raqia\(^{\circ}\) in Genesis 1. On the contrary, there is good reason to identify the one with the other. For we can see in Ezekiel that above the firmament is the throne of God in glory (vv. 26-28) just as above the firmament of heaven described in Genesis is the throne of God in glory (1 Kgs 22:19; Ps 2:4; 11:4; 103:19; Isa 6:1; 14:13; 66:1). Also the firmament in Ezekiel looked like it was made of crystal, exactly the substance that primitive peoples believed the sky was made of.\(^{48}\) These two similarities between the firmament in Ezekiel and the firmament in Genesis could hardly be coincidental. The firmament in Ezekiel 1 must be related to the firmament in Genesis 1, and a number of commentators have made the identification.\(^{49}\) Eichrodt, for example, calls the firmament in Ezekiel a "copy of that vault of heaven." The NT confirms the virtual identity of the firmament in Ezekiel and the firmament in Genesis by combining them into one image (Rev 4:6; 15:2).\(^{50}\)

We ought then on both biblical and hermeneutical grounds to interpret the nature of the raqia\(^{\circ}\) in Genesis 1 by the clear definition of raqia\(^{\circ}\) which we have in Ezekiel 1, and all the more so since the language of Genesis 1 suggests solidity in the first place and no usage of raqia\(^{\circ}\) anywhere states or even implies that it was not a solid object. This latter point bears repeating: there is not a single piece of evidence in the OT to support the conservative belief that the raqia\(^{\circ}\) was not solid.\(^{51}\) The historical meaning of raqia\(^{\circ}\), so far

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50 Note the "sea"(Genesis 1) and the "eyes" (Ezekiel 1) in Rev 4:6. See also commentaries on Revelation, especially by R. H. Charles. It might also be noted that although Exod 24:10 does not use the word raqia\(^{\circ}\), it testifies to the solidity of the firmament as well as to the idea that it was crystalline by saying that the "pavement" under God's feet was "like the material or substance of heaven in transparency."
51 The conservative interpretation (if an interpretation that rejects the historical-grammatical meaning of Scripture can be called conservative) rests on two arbitrary assumptions. One, that ancient men would conceive of the sky the same way modern men do (cf. J. Orr,
from being overthrown by the grammatical evidence, is confirmed by it. The historical-grammatical meaning of raqia in Gen 1:6-8 is very clearly a literally solid firmament.

It is to the credit of E. J. Young that, although believing in biblical inerrancy as much as any other conservative, he alone did not alter or rationalize the historical-grammatical meaning of raqia. In his Studies in Genesis One he defined raqia as "that which is hammered, beaten out" and noted that "the LXX στερέωμα and Vulgate firmamentum are satisfactory renderings."

Additionally and finally, the historical-grammatical meaning of raqia possibly illustrates the words of B. B. Warfield, who said as he defined biblical inerrancy, that an inspired writer could share the ordinary opinions of his day in certain matters lying outside the scope of his teachings, as, for example, with reference to the form of the earth, or its relation to the sun; and, it is not inconceivable that the form of his language when incidentally adverting to such matters, might occasionally play into the hands of such a presumption.

Certainly the historical-grammatical meaning of raqia is "the ordinary opinion of the writer's day." Certainly also it is not the purpose of Gen 1:7 to teach us the physical nature of the sky, but to reveal the creator of the sky. Consequently, the reference to the solid firmament "lies outside the scope of the writer's teachings" and the verse is still infallibly true.

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in principle by C. Gaenssle, "A Look"). Two, that God would not speak in Scripture to ancient men in terms of the ordinary opinions of their own day (cf. article 12 from the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy's Nineteen Articles in R. C. Sproul, Explaining Inerrancy, ICBI 1980, 28-27). Both assumptions are contrary to Scripture (cf. Seely, Inerrant Wisdom). 52 Young, Studies, 90 n. 94.


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THE PRE-MOSAIC TITHE: 
ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Mark A. Snoeberger*

In Leviticus 27 the Mosaic Law expressly commands the practice of tithing, codifying it for all Israel as a combined act of spiritual service and economic obligation for the advancement of the nation. This codification, however, was by no means the birth of the tithe, but a new expression of the ancient Near Eastern tithe infused with theological significance for the new political entity of Israel.1

The payment of tithes was no novel practice, having been performed for centuries by both biblical figures and pagans alike. It is well attested that the tithe2 was present in the very earliest of cultures—Roman, Greek, Carthaginian, Cretan, Silician, Phoenician, Chinese, Babylonian, Akkadian, and Egyptian—stretching back to the earliest written records of the human race.3 This extra-biblical practice of tithing must, of course, be considered when searching for the origin of the tithe. Was the tithe a divinely conceived custom, original with Yahweh and unique in its expression, or was tithing a divine adaptation of an originally pagan custom, bequeathed with theological significance by divine fiat? Further, was the tithe an act of worship alone, or a demonstration of political subservience: a primitive form of taxation? Or was it a combination of the two?

Many scholars (including most liberals) contend that the levitical

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2 The author intends the term in its technical sense—a tenth. As John E. Simpson notes of the nearly universal pagan practice of tithing, "the amount so given was almost invariably one-tenth" (This World’s Goods [New York: Revell, 1939], p. 88). Cf., however, Joseph M. Baumgarten, "On the Non-literal Use of ma'aser/dekate," Journal of Biblical Literature 103 (June 1984): 245-51.

institution was borrowed strictly from early contemporary heathen practices. On the other pole, some, generally more conservative, scholars contend that the universality of the tithe and the failure of attempts to discover its origin within secular sources point to a much more ancient practice—one instituted by God at the very dawn of human history.

To make either claim, one must look to the early chapters of Genesis for clues to the genesis of the tithe. If, indeed, concrete evidence for its origin can be discovered here, one can be assured that the tithe originated with God and that it was revealed by him from the very earliest times to mankind. Failure to discover the origin here does not rule out the possibility of divine origin, but it does render the origin of the tithe an argument from silence for either position. It is, therefore, the purpose of this essay is to probe the OT material, beginning with the sacrificial practices of Cain and Abel, continuing with the unprecedented payment of tithes by Abram to the priest of the most high God, Melchizedek, and concluding with Jacob's intention to tithe, for clues to the genesis of the pre-Mosaic tithe. We will then decide whether sufficient evidence exists to confirm its divine origin, then discuss briefly its relationship to the levitical tithe and its continuing applicability (or non-applicability) today.

THE GIVING PRACTICES OF CAIN AND ABEL (GENESIS 4:3-7)

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

In an attempt to establish the continuity of the tithe throughout human history, several older conservative scholars adopted an alternative

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5 Landsell, Sacred Tenth, 1:38; Babbs, Law of the Tithe, pp. 24-25.

6 All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the 1995 edition of NASB.
text and translation to affirm that Cain's and Abel's sacrifices establish tithing as early as Genesis 4. The LXX reading of verse 7 apparently reflects the Hebrew "םלדנלו" (to dissect or divide) rather than the MT's "םלדנה" (reflected in NASB's "at the door"). The resulting English translation of verse 7 identifies Cain's sin as his failure to "divide rightly." Furthering this conclusion is an alternate reading of a NT text, Hebrews 11:4, namely, that "Abel offered unto God a more abundant sacrifice than Cain." The conclusion drawn from these combined readings is that Cain's sin was specifically a failure to give an adequate percentage of his income to God. The percentage, it is deduced, must be none other than a tithe. This understanding is not unreasonable, as it follows the reading of the LXX, the text (though not the interpretation) of the early church fathers. However, the difficulty of this reading and the high degree of accuracy of the MT at this point have led most modern commentators to reject this reading out of hand, and with it the implied reference to proportional tithing by Abel.

The Occasion

The preceding discussion does not render the Cain and Abel incident as having no value to the discussion of the tithe. On the contrary, herein is the first recorded instance of an offering presented to God in the OT--offerings that would later be expanded to include the tithe.

7 The term in question, πλείονα, includes in its range of meaning both the qualitative idea of excellence and the quantitative idea of abundance (BAGD, p. 689), though most NT commentators have understood the usage in Hebrews 11:4 to be qualitative, that is, "a better sacrifice."

8 Landsell, Sacred Tenth, 1:40-41; Babbs, Law of the Tithe, p. 25.


11 The use of the word "expanded" in not intended to imply that the Israelite "cult" evolved on its own apart from the sovereign hand of God, as is asserted by many liberals.
The background of this incident is meager. We are no sooner told that Cain and Abel have been born when we suddenly find the boys as men, each with the respective occupations of agriculturalist and herdsman. After a period of time, both bring an offering to Yahweh. Cain brings some of the vegetables and fruits resulting from his labor as a farmer, Abel an offering of some of his livestock. For some reason not specified in this text, Yahweh rejects the former but receives the latter.

Several obvious questions arise from the narrative. How did Cain and Abel know to bring an offering to Yahweh? What was the nature of their offering? Why was Cain's offering rejected and Abel's accepted? And, ultimately, does their gift have any bearing on the levitical tithe or on the NT believer? Naturally, a correct understanding of the term used for this offering (נְזָן) is essential to the understanding of the purpose of the sacrifices presented in Genesis 4. We begin here in our search for the tithe in the OT.

The Term Employed

Many have concluded that the offerings of Genesis 4 were intended as atoning, expiatory sacrifices, based on the assumption that God's displeasure with Cain's offering stemmed from his failure to give a blood sacrifice.12 This theory fails on two counts. First, the term used to describe the offering, הָנִּמן, is elsewhere used of a bloodless sacrifice,13 and is the standard term used in the levitical code for the meal offering. Here in Genesis 4 Moses avoids using readily available, general terms that (see below); instead, it simply recognizes the progress of divine revelation which expands man's knowledge and adjusts his responsibilities. We need not, indeed, must not see the shadow of the Mosaic code veiled in the Cain/Abel narrative; nonetheless, this first recorded sacrifice does give us insight into God's expectations and the means by which he communicated them to early believers.

12 Robert S. Candlish, *An Exposition of Genesis* (reprint ed., Wilmington, DE: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1972), p. 65. Scofield sees the sin offering in the phrase "sin is crouching at the door." The term for sin (נָשָׁה) may refer to sin or to its sacrificial remedy, the "sin offering." Thus, Yahweh was informing Cain that he had not done well, and that his only solution was to offer a blood sacrifice (*The Scofield Reference Bible* [New York: Oxford, 1909], p. 11). The identification of this נָשָׁה as a crouching beast (רֵן), however, makes this option unlikely.

13 J. H. Kurtz goes so far as to say that the נְזָן was "exclusively" bloodless (*Sacrificial Worship of the Old Testament*, reprint of 1863 edition [Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1980], pp. 158-59), as does Hamilton (*Genesis*, 1:223), though 1 Samuel 2:17 and 26:19 indicate otherwise. The term has a broader meaning than its technical sense as a meal offering (*New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, s.v. "נְזָן," by Richard E. Averbeck, 2:980-87). It is best to conclude that the נְזָן was usually bloodless, and in its prescriptive, levitical sense (which is not the case here) was always bloodless.
denote blood sacrifice (e.g., הָלַח). While we may not extrapolate levitical language anachronistically onto the Genesis 4 incident, Moses' usage of the same term he would later use for the meal offering strongly suggests that this sacrifice was not intended to be viewed as a sin or guilt offering. Second, the event is predicated on the culmination ("in the course of time"—יְמֵי מִיָּמִים [v. 3]) of a lengthy period of agricultural productivity ("Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground" [v. 2]), indicating that this was no ordinary expiatory sacrifice, but a special, additional offering--one of thanksgiving for God's abundant blessing. Thus it is roughly, though not exactly, equivalent to Israel's firstfruits or meal offerings, not to their regular sin offerings or tithes.

The term הָלַח, in its non-technical usage, is also frequently associated with payment of tribute or taxes (Gen 32:13 [14 MT]; Judg 3:15, 17-18; 1 Sam 10:27). For this reason, it may be suggested that Cain and Abel's gifts were mandatory. However, the term may simply be employed "as an expression of respect, thanksgiving, homage, friendship, dependence," which functions do not all imply obligation.

The Reason for Cain's and Abel's Offerings

Having deduced, then, that this was an offering additional to the ordinary expiatory sacrifices, we move on to discover why the offering was given. While biblical revelation gives us no precedent or mandate for this type of offering, God's displeasure with Cain's offering implies that Cain failed to meet some divinely revealed requirement. We have already rejected the possibilities of the inappropriate content or quantity of the sacrifice. Other options include inadequate quality in the offering.

15 I assume that the practice of expiatory sacrifices has been a theological necessity in every dispensation to effect forgiveness of sins and right standing before God. Cain's and Abel's gifts were mandatory, however, did not fall into this category.
17 Waltke suggests that the opening v. 4 is adversative, highlighting the "fat" and "firstborn" elements of Abel's sacrifice in contrast to Cain's mere offer of "some" of his fruits and vegetables ("Cain and His Offering," p. 368; cf. also Delitzsch, Genesis, pp. 180-81; Hermann Gunkel, Genesis [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997], pp. 42-43; Allen P. Ross, Creation & Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988], pp. 157-58); Kenneth A. Matthews, Genesis 1:1-11:26; NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), pp. 267-68. We note, however, that there is no equivalent of fat for Cain's offering, nor does Moses specify that Cain's offering was not of the firstfruits. John Sailhamer, in fact, suggests that Cain was also
deficient integrity in the offerer,\textsuperscript{18} or even the simple possibility that Abel was the object of God's elective prerogative while Cain was not\textsuperscript{19}--the text does not specify. The NT commentary is simply that Abel's offering was offered "in faith" while Cain's was not (Heb 11:4). This may imply that God had given explicit instructions regarding expiatory and other sacrifices;\textsuperscript{20} however, this argument flows purely from silence. All that can be conclusively deduced is that Cain's sacrifice did not issue from faith, but from other, inferior, motivation.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The offerings of Cain and Abel give evidence that men professing to be God-fearers, from earliest times, brought offerings to Yahweh (v. 3) from their bounty. There was, however, no percentage specified, nor any purpose delineated other than direct worship and gratitude addressed to God. Thus, there is little to link these offerings with the basis of the ensuing levitical tithe, nor to shed light on its continuing applicability. While it is possible that God may have established binding requirements for offerings in the OT apart from written revelation, we certainly cannot deduce from the Cain and Abel narrative that the tithe was among these requirements.

\textbf{ABRAM'S TITHE TO MELCHIZEDEK}

\textit{(Genesis 14:17-24)}

Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him [Abram] at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all. The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a

\begin{thebibliography}{99}


\bibitem{Landsell} Landsell, \textit{Sacred Tenth}, 1:41.

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The Pre-Mosaic Tithe

sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.' I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

We move onward from Cain and Abel in our quest for the genesis of the tithe in the OT to Abram's unprecedented tithe paid to Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the most high God. It is in this passage that the technical term "tithe" (רְשֵׁה) is first used in Scripture, making it the first recorded instance of OT tithing. In this incident is found the most promising data for the current study, thus a large segment of the essay will be dedicated to it.

The Occasion

In Genesis 14, Abram is informed that a band of marauding monarchs led by Chedorlaomer had sacked the pentapolis that included Sodom; where his nephew Lot was living. Many of the goods of the city had been seized, and Lot had also been taken captive. Abram gathers a small band from his household, attacks and defeats the marauders in an unlikely nighttime foray, pursues them far to the north, and recovers what had been stolen. Emboldened by Abram's remarkable success, king Bera of Sodom travels northward to the "King's Valley" just south of Salem to meet Abram. He is joined by the local king, Melchizedek, in the valley. King Bera begrudges Abram the spoils but asks for the recaptured citizenry. Melchizedek, identified here as a priest of the most high God (נְזֵרָה), brings out bread and wine to refresh and reward Abram and his men, blesses Abram repeatedly, and blesses Abram's God for the victory. As a biblically unprecedented reciprocation, Abram gives to Melchizedek a tenth of all (presumably of all the spoils). The rest of the spoils are then meted out and the incident is closed.

The Term Employed

The Hebrew term for "tithe" (רְשֵׁה) is simply the adjectival form of the number ten, רְשֵׁה. The term is used infrequently in Scripture apart from the levitical and deuteronomistic legislation concerning its contribution within the assembly. The term's employment is by no means complex, but it is precise. The tithe is an exact tenth, and is not used in a generic sense to refer to multiple types of offerings of varying amounts.

In Ugaritic and Phoenician sources the tithe was generally paid as

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21 BDB, p. 798.

the standard unit of taxation owed to the throne. While priests sometimes collected this tithe, there was often no idea of worship involved—the priests were viewed as any secular recipient of the tithe would be. Further, it is apparent that, even when the priests collected the tithe, the state, and not the religious personnel, controlled its distribution. This is contrary to the Mosaic legal practice, where, in all recorded situations save one (1 Sam 8:15-17), the tithe was paid to Yahweh through the hand of the priest, and presumably dispensed by the same.

The ancient Near Eastern tithe was paid to the king on everything earned by the subjects of the throne, including produce, animals, and loot won in battle. For this reason it is not unusual that Abram paid a tithe. What is unusual is the abruptness of Melchizedek's appearance, the lack of explanatory details concerning his kingship and priesthood, and the mystery surrounding his relationship to Abram. These enigmas must be resolved along with other questions, such as whether Abram was paying tithes to Melchizedek as his king or as his priest (or both) and whether the tithe Abram paid was voluntary or mandatory. A brief look at Melchizedek is in order to answer these questions.

**The Recipient of Abram's Tithe—Melchizedek**

Because Abram's tithe, unlike that of the other pre-Mosaic offerings, involves a human as well as a divine recipient, and because that recipient's role seems even more prominent than Abram's in the context of the narrative, Melchizedek merits special study. Rising suddenly to prestige in verse 18 and vanishing just as suddenly a scant two verses later, Melchizedek's function raises many questions. This brief study cannot answer them all, but will endeavor to answer two: What did Melchizedek's offices entail, and what was Abram's relationship to these offices?

**Melchizedek as King**

Several questions must be answered concerning Melchizedek as king before conclusions may be drawn about the tithe paid him. First, what


25 Ibid., p. 123. This is not to say that the Mosaic tithe had no secular function—the Mosaic tithe provided poverty relief (Deut 14:28). However, its primary function was to finance "the service of the tent of meeting" and to provide for the Levites "who have no inheritance" (Num 18:21-32).
was the nature of his kingship and the extent of his realm? Second, and closely related to the first, what was Abram's political relationship to the king?

Melchizedek's Realm

The term "king" (נָּבָא) may be misleading for the reader accustomed to the pomp and prestige of present-day royalty. The fact that at least six kings occupied such a small area of southern Palestine suggests that the kingdoms were quite small and the kings little more than local chieftains who ruled a city and the small tract of surrounding land used by his constituency. This is further attested by the fact that little extrabiblical material survives to tell us about these "kingdoms." On the other hand the marauding eastern kings were apparently much more powerful, one each from the Elamite, Amorite, Hurrian, and Hittite empires. This is not to say, however, that these kings represented the full force of these empires, nor that these empires were in the height of their glory when the invasion occurred.

Melchizedek's realm was the city of Salem. This inexplicable shortening of "Jerusalem" has led many scholars, even conservative ones, to at least entertain the possibility that this was not Jerusalem at all, but another town, perhaps Shiloh, Shechem, or Samaria. Since, however, Psalms 76:2 (3 MT) and 110:2, 4 identify Melchizedek's realm with "Zion," and since the common identification of the valley of הֵוָו (v. 17) is confirmed by 2 Samuel 18:18 to be the junction of the nearby Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, there is no doubt that the city, was Jerusalem. There is nothing to suggest, however, that Meichizedek’s reign in Jerusalem had any special significance to the narrative. Jerusalem was no "holy city" until David's establishment of the seat of his kingdom and the tabernacle (and later Solomon's temple) there.

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26 Philip J. Nel indicates a wide range of meaning for the term, the minimum element being the exercise of rule over a realm, whether that be of a tribe, city-state, or larger territory such as a country or empire (NIDOTTE, s.v. "נָבָא," 2:956).

27 Hamilton, Genesis, 1:399-400; Speiser, Genesis, 1:106-8.

28 For an overview of the options posited, see J. A. Emerton’s article, "The Site of Salem, the City of Melchizedek (Genesis xiv 18)," in Studies in the Pentateuch, ed. J. A. Emerton, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum XLI (Leiden: Brill, 1990): 45-71.

29 Contra Driver, Genesis, p. 164.

30 In fact, the Jebusite occupation of the city until David's conquest of the city in 998 B.C., recorded in 2 Sam 5:6-8, makes it one of the last Canaanite cities to be conquered by Israel.
Melchizedek's Royal Relationship to Abram

Since it is widely held in liberal circles that the narrative concerning Melchizedek (vv. 18-20) is a fictional, secondary insertion, very little scholarship has been spent studying the historicity of Melchizedek or the correlation of the Melchizedek pericope with the local context.31 This void of serious study makes Melchizedek's relationship to the surrounding kings and to Abram difficult to discern.

Some propose that Melchizedek's was the smallest of the kingdoms in the narrative, suggested by his lack of involvement in the defensive campaign.32 Perhaps he could spare no men but could provide some provisions for the victors.

Others have suggested that Salem, since it is to be associated with Jerusalem (Ps 76:2 [3 MT]; 110:2, 4), the most prominent and advantageous geographical location for a city in the region, would have been the capital of a very important city-state in Palestine.33 Its presidency over the "valley of kings," apparently a very famous and important place in the ancient Near East34 also suggests that Melchizedek's kingship was a powerful, even a supervisory one. Wenham suggests that his dual role as king and priest would have made him a wealthy and hence a powerful king, as evidenced by his supply of "royal fare" for Abram.35 He further suggests that his supply of bread and wine was his duty as the "dominant ally."36 There is no explanation given, however, why Melchizedek, if he was so dominant, did not become involved in the military action. It is also inconclusive that bread and wine were "royal fare" or that Melchizedek's wealth exceeded that of the other local kings.

It seems, therefore, unlikely that Melchizedek exercised authority as an overlord over Abram and the five western kings. This factor is of considerable importance for discussing the tithe paid by Abram--it is unlikely that the tithe represented a tribute or tax paid as a matter of duty to Abram's ruler.

Melchizedek as Priest

Having established the unlikelihood that Melchizedek's regal

31 Hamilton, Genesis, 1:408-9, n. 4.
34 Gunkel, Genesis, p. 279.
35 Genesis, 1 :316.
36 Ibid.
authority extended over Abram, we now turn to Melchizedek's role as priest of the most high God (ךלע יְהֹוָה נִכֹּל). We face similar questions with Melchizedek's priesthood as we did with his kingship—What was the nature of his priesthood and the extent of his authority as priest? Second, and again related to the first, what was Abram's spiritual relationship to Melchizedek?

**Melchizedek's Priesthood**

Melchizedek is labeled by Moses as a נִכֹּל—a priest. This is the first mention of a priest in the OT, though the concept was not new. A priest is someone who stands in the gap between God and man, representing man to God and God to man.37 We note, then, that Abram, Noah, and presumably all godly familial heads and clan-leaders in the pre-Abrahamic era functioned as microcosmic priests in a limited capacity as primitive mediators of what would later become the theocratic kingdom.

The first consideration in the study of Melchizedek's priesthood is a very basic one—Whom was Melchizedek serving as priest? The text indicates that the deity served was called "the Most High God" (ךלע יְהֹוָה). What has been of considerable debate is whether this deity is to be identified with Yahweh, the God of Abraham, or with some local deity.

Liberals have generally contended that יְהֹוָה was a local deity.38 Based on their assumption that the Hebrew religion began with Abram and over time evolved into modern Judaism, they naturally contend that a reference to Abram's Yahweh in this pericope would be anachronistic. This contention is furthered by their conclusions that the shortened names for מִלְּחָמָה, יְהֹוָה and יְהֹוָה are very late developments,39 heightening the anachronism of seeing Yahweh in Genesis 14:18-20. Further complicating the matter is the absence of the article on יְהֹוָה, suggesting that this is a local god, and not the Hebrew God. Instead, it is assumed that the use of יְהֹוָה is the widely used Semitic term for various and sundry gods, a term which Israel later borrowed as a designation for her evolving God.

This theory is fraught with bad exegesis and unbiblical assumptions. First, it must be noted that the absence of the article is common with compound names for God,40 rendering its absence here ancillary to the discussion. Second, the Hebrew term יְהֹוָה has no secular parallels other

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37 NIDOTTE, s.v. "נִכֹּל," by Philip Jenson, 2:600.
38 Speiser, Genesis, 1:104; Westermann, Genesis, 2:204; Driver, Genesis, p. 165; Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 279-80. Wenham also takes this view (Genesis, 1:316-17).
39 Speiser, Genesis, 1:104.
40 Delitsch, Genesis, 1:409.
than a rather recently developed Phoenician god, whom Philo labeled as 'Ελιουθέν, ὁ ὑψηστός, who even liberals admit emerged long after the Israelite usage had been established (Num 24:16, Deut 32:8, etc.). We conclude with Speiser and Gunkel that the term was not borrowed by Israel from her pagan neighbors; rather, Israel's neighbors borrowed the term from her.41 Further, as Hamilton points out, the late Phoenician deity 'Ελιουθέν was the grandson of ἐλίκ.42 Thus, even if a correlation is attempted, it fails to give us a single god, but two separate ones. In only one other occasion in all known ancient Near Eastern literature are ἐλίκ and ἔλεος found together—in Psalm 78:35 of the Hebrew canon, and that with reference to the God of Israel.43 We conclude that there is simply no evidence for a god by the name of ἔλεος ἐλίκ in the Canaanite or any other pantheon.

Furthering this conclusion is later revelation in Psalm 110, where Melchizedek's priesthood is discussed with reference only to מַלְשֶׁה—neither ἐλίκ nor its cognates are mentioned in the entire psalm. Sealing the matter is Hebrews 5:6, 10, where the Greek equivalents of both מַלְשֶׁה and ἐλίκ (κύριος and θεός) are used interchangeably in the context of the priesthood of Melchizedek. There is no question that the מַלְשֶׁה whom Melchizedek served as priest was Abram's God, the God of Israel. Indeed, as Homer Kent points out, "it is inconceivable that [Abram] would have acknowledged the priesthood of anyone other than a representative of the true God."44 We add to this that Abram would never have acknowledged anyone put the one true God as the "creator of heaven and earth" and the God who gave him victory in battle (vv. 19-20).

We move on now to discuss the extent of the authority of Melchizedek's priesthood. It apparently was a common practice in the ancient Near East for a king to function as a priest for his people.45 In fact, it is apparent that Abram himself functioned in much the same capacity, building altars and offering sacrifices (functions of a priest) while functioning as the leader of his clan as a "mighty prince" (Myhilox σιθ;), a term translated as "king" (Βασιλεύς) in the LXX version of Genesis 23:6. This is in keeping with the dispensational setting of Melchizedek's day. As yet there had been no establishment of a single central altar.

41 Speiser, Genesis, 1:104; Gunkel, Genesis, p. 280.
42 Genesis, 1:410.
43 Cf. also Psalm 7:17 (18 MT) for the use מַלְשֶׁה with מַלְשֶׁה.
44 The Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972), p. 124.
45 Gunkel, Genesis, p. 280; Westermann, Genesis, 2:204-5; Wenham, Genesis, 1:316.
There had been no formal introduction of Abram as the priest for the world, though it had been privately revealed that his was to be the chosen line to bring blessing to all the nations. Thus it seems likely that, until this point, the dispensation of human government was in effect. God-fearers of this period approached God through their various God-fearing clan-leaders--such as Melchizedek.

This solution, however, only leads to another question. If Melchizedek had jurisdiction as priest only within his own clan (there being no biblical basis for regional high priests with hierarchical sovereignty over lesser priests) why did Abram recognize Melchizedek as his priest?

**Melchizedek's Spiritual Relationship to Abram**

If Melchizedek's jurisdiction extended no further than his clan, the tithe paid by Abram to Melchizedek seems a bit out of place. Hebrews 7:7, however, in discussing Abram and Melchizedek, insists that, "without any dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater," thus implying that Melchizedek was in some sense greater than Abram when he blesses Abram, and, presumably, when he received tithes from Abram.

Alva J. McClain recognizes the complexity of this passage and acknowledges the possibility that "in the era before Abraham there were other kings who held a similar mediatiorial authority between their subjects and the true God." He goes on to theorize that it was "this precise point in Biblical history...[that] marks the end of an era and the beginning of a new order of things." Melchizedek's blessing effectively heralded for the whole world that the mediatiorial idea was being localized in "concrete form historically in miniature." The theory makes Melchizedek roughly comparable to other transitional figures, such as Anna, Simeon, and John the Baptist, who, having announced the arrival...

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46 This essay assumes, with most commentators, that the tithe was paid by Abram to Melchizedek, although the text is perhaps less than absolutely explicit on this point. R. H. Smith contends that it was Melchizedek who paid the tithe as an attempt to bribe the warlike Abram to leave the area ("Abraham and Melchizedek," *Zietschrift fur die Altes-tamentliche Wissenschaft* 77 [1965]: 134). This narrow view ignores, however, the broader context of Scripture (Hebrews 7) and the traditional understanding of the passage (LXX). J. A. Emerton objects to Smith's view, but asserts that leaving Abram as the tither contradicts verse 23, where Abram is said to have given all the spoil back to the king of Sodom ("Riddle," p. 408). But this is not what verse 23 says. It says, in fact, that Abram would not take anything that belonged to the king of Sodom. This statement does not preclude his tithing or giving the culturally accepted share owed to hired mercenaries (see below).


48 Ibid., p. 51.

49 Ibid., p. 50
of the Messiah, faded into oblivion. Representative of this view before McClain was none other than Robert S. Candlish, who, though no dispensationalist, on this one point sounds like one:

Melchizedek, as the last preserver, as it were, of the primitive patriarchal hope, hands over his function to one more highly favored than himself, in the very spirit of the Baptist—"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). His own occupation, as a witness and standing type of the Messiah, is over; one newly called out of heathenism is to succeed and to take his place. He hails in Abram the promised seed, and blesses him accordingly. Thus the Patriarchal, the Abrahamic, and the Levitical dispensations appear, all of them, in their true character, as subordinate and shadowy.50

Although the theory cannot be verified (McClain and Candlish argue from silence that Melchizedek relinquished his priestly functions after this incident), there is much to commend it. The timing is correct, since Abram's call was quite recent. The public announcement is appropriate, for without it no one would have been aware of the dispensational change. The prominence of Melchizedek's delivery of blessings (Josh is employed three times in the two verses of Melchizedek's brief discourse) is also significant in light of the reciprocal blessings promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 12:1-3) to those who would bless Abram. Melchizedek's repeated blessings and his disclosure that God was blessing and being blessed specifically through Abram announced to the listening world that Abram had been specially selected by God as his unique mediatorial representative.51

The question still remains, however, why Melchizedek was viewed as "greater" than Abram, able to give him a blessing, and worthy of receiving his tithe. The commentaries are generally silent on this issue, and the question is difficult to answer. It seems best to understand that

50 Genesis, p. 143.
51 The action of blessing implied in the term נְדָע, as explained by Hebrews 7:7, always flows from the greater to the lesser. It is no contradiction, however, that Melchizedek "blessed" God. While active blessing (the impartation of something of value to someone) can never be offered by mortals to God, men can "bless" God in a "passive and stative sense" by speaking highly of him or attributing praise to him (NIDOTTE, s.v. נדוע, "by Michael L. Brown, 1:764). Hebrews 7:7 is by no means at odds with Genesis 14:20.
52 Victor Hamilton completely misses the point of the repeated use of נְדָע when he begrudges Abram his blessings while his 318 companions went unmentioned with the sarcastic comment, "As one would expect, it is the general, not the private, who gets the kudos" (Genesis, 1:409). It is not because Abram was the "general" that he got the "kudos"; it was because he was one with whom God had covenanted to make a great nation and to be a source of blessing to all the nations.
Melchizedek was not permanently or personally superior to Abram, but that at that moment Melchizedek stood between God and Abram and as the better. 53 Indeed, any time a person stands in the place of God his superiority is instantly, if temporarily, confirmed by virtue of the God he represents. McClain's comments (above) may also be informative: Melchizedek, representing the authority of the old dispensation, was ceding the reins of the incipient mediatorial kingdom to its new mediator, after which time Abram became superior to Melchizedek.

We thus conclude that Abram's recognition of Melchizedek as a superior was not because Melchizedek was some type of regional high priest, hierarchically presiding over all other lesser priests in the area. Nonetheless, for the moment, Melchizedek stood in the place of God, and, as such, exercised temporary spiritual authority over Abram, an authority which Abram recognized by the giving of a tithe.

The Reason for Abram's Tithe

In the previous section we established that the basis for Abram's tithe was the (temporarily) 54 superior priesthood of Melchizedek. We now move to Abram's purpose for giving him a tithe. Was it a social (political) function or an act of pure worship? Was it mandatory or voluntary?

Some suggest that Abram's was a primitive payment to the deity for making him victorious in battle. 55 This is generally a liberal idea 56 and is held only by those who deny that Melchizedek was a priest of the one true God.

Others, chiefly those who view Melchizedek as a theophany, view

53 Kent, Hebrews, p. 129.
54 By using this qualifier the author is not intending to negate the arguments of Hebrews 5-7 or Psalm 110. For typological purposes, that moment of superiority was captured by the later authors and coupled with a few of the sudden and mysterious factors surrounding the appearance of Melchizedek in Scripture to provide vivid illustrations of the superiority of Christ. As with all types there is not a one-to-one correspondence between every detail, thus it is not necessary to elevate Melchizedek to some mysterious or supernatural plane to preserve the analogy between him and Christ (as some have done by suggesting that Melchizedek's appearance in Genesis 14 was a theophany).
55 Westermann, Genesis, 2:206; Speiser, Genesis, 1:109; Wenham, Genesis, 1:317.
56 A more radically liberal idea, held by Gunkel (Genesis, p. 281) and Driver (Genesis, pp. 167-68), is that the character Melchizedek was pseudepigraphal, being invented, along with the legend of the Jebusite coalition, in David's time to lend legitimacy to the establishment of his new capital in Jerusalem.
the gift as a direct act of worship to God.  

Still others suggest that the tithe was rendered to Melchizedek as his share of the spoils of battle in compensation for his role in the conquest of the four invading kings, a "postbellum distribution of the booty, in which the spoils are distributed equally between those who personally fought. . . and for those who for one reason or another did not actively engage in the fighting." This reminds us of similar incidents in Numbers 31:17 and 1 Samuel 30:21-25, where personnel left behind were afforded shares of the spoils despite their failure to actively participate in the battle.

While this last theory is attractive, it has a few flaws. First, the tithe to Melchizedek is set apart from the rest of the distribution of the spoils—the tithe occurs in verse 20, but the provisions for distribution of the spoils are not made until the very last verse of the chapter. Further, Abram's tithe is mentioned in close proximity to Melchizedek's priestly blessing of Abram, suggesting that his tithe-giving had a purely spiritual purpose, not a politico-cultural one. The king of Sodom clearly did not understand this exchange, and apparently thought that the division of spoils had begun in v. 20. He immediately jumped in and made his bid for the people of his city, abandoning all hope of regaining anything else. Abram's negative response is quite revealing: he wanted no blessings, material or spiritual, from the wicked king of Sodom to cloud or overshadow the priestly blessing he had just received from Melchizedek, nor create any sense of obligation of Abram to Sodom. As a result, he renounced all claim to the spoils. Third, Abram's comments in verse 23, that he would not take anything that rightly belonged to the king of Sodom, seems to indicate that, after Melchizedek's tenth and a small mercenary stipend for the efforts of Abram's companions, the rest of the spoils went back to their previous owners. This is in contrast to the ancient Near Eastern custom. While the spoils belonged legally to Abram, simple kindness required him to return the property to its rightful owners.

It seems most likely that the tithe was paid to Melchizedek as a voluntary reciprocation for the priestly functions performed by Melchizedek and a thank offering given to God for the success of the military excursion. As such it represented a willing consecration of a

57 Candlish, *Genesis*, pp. 142-46.
portion of the goods to God through the hand of the priest, in acknowledgement that the whole belonged to God.\textsuperscript{62} It also represented Abram's recognition that the dispensational baton, as it were, was being passed to him by its legitimate forebear.

Why Abram chose a tenth and not some other amount is not explained. As has been already demonstrated, payment of a tenth was a universal practice in the ancient known world. We may hypothesize that God, though unrecorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, established the tenth as a general figure to be spent on priestly administration, but it may be that this amount was simply selected by Abram as a reasonable amount to fulfill sacrificial duty to God. Nor have we ruled out the idea that the custom was merely adopted from Abram's heathen neighbors. Genesis 26:5,\textsuperscript{63} which informs us that Abram obeyed God, along with all his commandments, statutes, and laws, could point to the first of these options, but there is no clear link of 26:5 with the specific statute of tithing.

We may only speculate about Melchizedek's subsequent usage of the tithes he received, but it seems likely that they went to finance the priestly services provided by Melchizedek as a mediator for God.\textsuperscript{64}

Conclusion

While Abram's tithe apparently meets with God's approval, several factors lead us to conclude that it has little bearing on the levitical tithe and on our current practice. First, the tithe mentioned here is unique to the transition between the dispensations of human government and promise and has no genuine parallels in the rest of Scripture. Second, the silence as to the origin of and the apparently voluntary nature of Abram's tithe render it unlike anything in the rest of biblical experience. Abram's tithe had a purpose, origin, and nature distinct from the Mosaic institution.

\textbf{JACOB'S PROMISED TITHE (GENESIS 28:18-22)}

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top. He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father's house in safety, then the

\textsuperscript{62} Candlish, \textit{Genesis}, p. 142.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
LORD will be my God. This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

The second and only other OT mention of the tithe prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law comes in the form of a tithe promised to God by Jacob after his ladder vision at Bethel and God's reaffirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob there (vv. 10-15). As in the Abram/Melchizedek narrative, the Hebrew term יִשְׁמַע is used, so we are sure that it is an actual tithe in question. Since this term has already been discussed, we move directly to a study of the occasion of this promised tithe to understand its purpose and to glean insights into the validity and continuing applicability of Jacob's practice.

The Occasion

The event comes at a particularly turbulent period in Jacob's life, a fact which weighs heavily on our study. In chapter 27, Jacob, true to his name, had completed the two-fold deception of his father and brother, and had successfully stolen the birthright away from Esau. Esau's resultant rage and apparent intent to kill Jacob for the deception led Jacob, at his mother's bidding and with the blessing of his father, to flee to the house of his uncle, Laban, until his brother's anger abated.

In route to Laban's house Jacob is arrested by a dream in the city of Luz (which he later renamed "Bethel"). In the dream, Yahweh renewed the Abrahamic Covenant with Jacob. In so doing, Yahweh confirmed to Jacob that he was the chosen son through whom the covenant blessings would flow. Jacob awakens in fear and quickly erects an altar at the site of the dream and gives a sacrifice of oil on an altar to God. Upon making the sacrifice he offers up a vow to God that he would make Yahweh his God and give him a tenth, presumably of all his possessions, so long as Yahweh spared him, provided for his needs, and prospered him during his sojourn at his uncle's residence. God was true to his promise, but there is no indication whether or not Jacob fulfilled his vow.

Again, questions arise from the narrative that affect our understanding of the promised tithe. Was Jacob's promised tithe an act of faith or part of some sort of inappropriate "bargain" made with God? If the latter, can Jacob's tithe be considered normative or foundational to the study of the tithe in the rest of the OT, or have any bearing on its practice (or non-practice) today? Whether or not the vow was actually fulfilled, what was the reason and purpose for Jacob's tithe?

The Spiritual State of Jacob

While most evangelicals have maintained that this dream finds or at least leaves Jacob converted, there are three factors in the narrative and
one in Genesis 32 which indicate that Jacob's vow to tithe to Yahweh was an illegitimate act of worship.

First, Jacob's reaction of fright upon the appearance of Yahweh indicates an improper relationship to God. Many commentators take the reaction by Jacob to be a healthy, reverential awe of God and his description of the site as "awesome," inducing genuine worship.\(^{65}\) If this is the case, Jacob's succeeding actions denote consecration. This is a legitimate interpretation of the terms employed. In fact, the "fear of the Lord" seems to be the OT equivalent for faith (Prov 1:7). The Hebrew root קָרָע ("to fear"), represented in the Jacob narrative by the Qal imperfect and nippal participle respectively, however, has a wide range of meaning, extending from a meaning of "reverence" or "respect" on one pole to "terror" or "fright" on the other.\(^{66}\) The present context favors the second pole.\(^{67}\) First, whenever the term is used elsewhere of Jacob in subsequent contexts, it clearly denotes "fright," that is, fear that caused him to respond by running or conniving, rather than trusting (e.g., 31:31, 32:7, 11).\(^{68}\) Second, Jacob's ignorance that God could be here in Luz (v. 16) may indicate that he was shocked to find God here.\(^{69}\) Waltke and O'Connor concur, demonstrating from the emphatic adverb זְכַר that the verse conveys "a sudden recognition in contrast to what was theretofore assumed."\(^{70}\) If this is the case, then Jacob is betraying a woeful lack of knowledge and respect for the Almighty. Third, as Hamilton points out, this is the only instance in the patriarchal narratives (except possibly 15:12) that a theophany is ever met with astonishment or fright. The other patriarchs always "took theophanies in stride."\(^{71}\)

Further developing the "fright" idea of the term קָרָע is Jacob's apparent lack of faith in the explicit promises of God. After hearing the promises, Jacob makes a conditional vow whose conditions were the very promises he had just received from Yahweh. In verse 15 Yahweh promises to be with Jacob, to keep him, and bring him back to the land. Jacob responds in verse 20 that if indeed God remains with him, keeps


\(^{66}\) BDB, s.v. "קָרָע," p. 431.


\(^{68}\) Hamilton, *Genesis*, 2:244.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 2:243-44.


\(^{71}\) *Genesis*, 2:245.
him safe, clothes and feeds him, and returns him to the land, then he would make Yahweh his God, pay tithes, etc. By thus casting his conversion in the future, Jacob is apparently refusing to exercise faith at this time. Some suggest the conditional particle, "if" used here precludes a genuine contingency, instead meaning "since," or "forasmuch as," much like the Greek first class condition. However, the grammar of this passage suggests otherwise. In his remarks about conditional clauses, Ge-

The immediately following lead verb is in the imperfect, and all the succeeding verbs of the protasis are cast in the perfect with the consecutive (making their function equivalent to the imperfect), clearly demonstrating that the vow represents a genuine contingency. Thus, his actions of building an altar and his promise to tithe on his livelihood are not deeds of faith; instead, they are wary, fearful acts of a trapped person to appease and "strike a bargain" with God.

To the grammatical argument we add an obvious theological one. The sheer brazenness of a mortal establishing a conditional covenant with the Almighty gives evidence to Jacob's unconverted state. To place God under obligation to act a certain way and to stipulate that God must fulfill certain obligations before one consecrates himself is not an act of faith but an audacious challenge to God's sovereignty, inspired by

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72 Hamilton suggests that the latter half of verse 21 is actually part of the protasis, not part of the apodosis (Genesis, 2:248). As such the verses should read, "If God stays with me... protects me... gives me bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I return safely to my fathers house and if Yahweh shall be my God; then this stone... shall be God's abode... and a tenth will I tithe to you" (2:237-38). This interpretation does little to change the "bargaining" arrangement proposed by Jacob.

73 Candlish, Genesis, pp. 294-95; also Barndollar, "Scriptural Tithe," p. 108.


75 Barndollar makes a serious error in affirming that "all the verbs which follow "in verses 20 and 21 are perfect" ("Scriptural Tithe," p. 108), a faulty affirmation which he uses to support his theory that there was no actual contingency in Jacob's vow. The grammar, in fact, proves quite the opposite.
unbelief.

Finally, the events surrounding Jacob's dream at Peniel and his wrestling match there (32:24-32 [25-33 MT]) indicate that this latter event was the actual conversion of Jacob. The name change (v. 28 [29 MT]) from Jacob ("deceiver") to Israel (probably "let God rule") is not a mere change of name, but is representative of a change in character—from a depraved self-server to one who recognizes and submits to God's sovereignty. Likewise, Jacob's naming of the site "Peniel" ("the face of God") is not due to his struggling with God himself, but because he has finally come to a point where he has recognized Yahweh as his God and, much to his relief, is enabled to exercise true faith in the promises made to him at Bethel so many years before. The contention that Jacob's conversion experience took place at Peniel, then, naturally precludes its occurrence at Bethel or some prior occasion.

One notable objection to such a late conversion date for Jacob, and perhaps the reason why most commentators assume Jacob to be saved in Genesis 28, is the bequest of the Abrahamic promises to Jacob at Bethel. It is contended that God's reiteration of the Abrahamic promises to Jacob assumes his salvation. This, however, is a logical non sequitur. The OT teems with examples of beneficiaries of national election, even heads of the mediatorial kingdom, who were never converted (e.g., many of the judges and kings, most notably, Saul). The unconditional covenant promises given nationally to the patriarchs and their descendants had no direct bearing on their individual election to salvation (Rom 9:6). Thus it was not necessary for Jacob to have been a believer to receive the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

This author, with a fair degree of confidence asserts, then, that Jacob's vow to tithe was made while he was yet unconverted. This fact, coupled with the silence as to the fulfillment of the vow render this reference to tithing a rather slender strand of evidence for affirming the foundation of the levitical tithe or asserting an ongoing tithe in our present dispensation.

The Reason for Jacob's Promised Tithe

The fact that Jacob settled on a tithe as opposed to some other

76 Hamilton, *Genesis*, 2:334. There is a bit of debate regarding the exact meaning of this name. The scope of this essay, however, does not require interaction with the debate except to assert that the change of name signals a change of heart.

77 Whether or not the "man" with whom Jacob struggled was a preincarnate form of Christ is a matter of considerable debate; however, since this is not, apparently, the source of the name "Peniel," the issue will be left unresolved.

amount may indicate that he had some prior exposure to the tithe. Jacob may have been following the lead of his grandfather or other God-fearers with whom he was acquainted. In light of Jacob's faulty view of the extent of God's presence, authority, and faithfulness to His promises and of Jacob's willingness to demean God's sovereignty by "bargaining" with Him, it is more likely that he was borrowing the tithing practice of the surrounding pagans. As with Abram, no clear conclusions may be drawn.

Nor is it certain what the purpose or method of payment was if, indeed, Jacob fulfilled his vow. While Abram still had a priest external to himself, it seems unlikely, if McClain's and Candlish's theory is correct, that any legitimate priests of Yahweh remained to whom Jacob could pay his tithes. Perhaps he would have consumed the tithe on an altar to Yahweh, or used it to finance priestly duties performed among his family. Again, the text gives us no sound answers.

Conclusion

Because Jacob's promised tithe resembles, even derives from, the heathen practices of his neighbors, it adds little to our study. The basis for the levitical tithe certainly does not derive from Jacob's practice. This fact, coupled with Jacob's unconverted state and the silence of Scripture as to the fulfillment of Jacob's vow, should cause us to dismiss Genesis 28 from consideration in the quest for the genesis of the tithe.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRE-MOSAIC TITHE FOR PRESENT-DAY INSTITUTIONS

If tithing were confined to the Mosaic Law it would be easy to dismiss its validity today. In that the Mosaic Law has been set aside in the work of Christ (Rom 10:4, 2 Cor 3:7-11, etc.), tithing, as part of that unified legal corpus, would also be set aside. The pre-Mosaic tithe complicates the issue, raising the possibility that the tithe might be a trans-dispensational practice, part of the moral code of God, and thus a continuing obligation for NT believers.

There can be no denial of the fact of tithing before the Law;

80 Cf., however, Barndollar, "The Scriptural Tithe," p. 111.
81 To be sure, many a covenant theologian would recoil at such a statement and assert that the law is still in effect and the command to tithe is still in vogue (e.g., Edward A. Powell and Rousas J. Rushdooney, Tithing and Dominion [Vallecito, CA: Ross House, 1979], pp. 11-14). The scope of this essay does not include this issue, so it will be left for others to debate. Instead this section will address the continuing validity of the tithe strictly on the basis of the pre-Mosaic practice.
however, the assertion of a continuing principle necessitates more than a mere mention of the term "tithe" prior to the giving of the Law. As Pieter Verhoef, a non-dispensationalist, concedes, "a pre-Mosaic custom does not, as a matter of course, transcend the Old Testament dispensation, becoming an element of the universal and timeless moral code."

There must also be clear evidence that the tithe was divinely mandated before the Law or somehow sourced in God's nature. Further, there must be a parallelism between the practice of the tithe in the pre-Mosaic period and that in our present experience.

God's Nature and Mandate and the Pre-Mosaic Tithe

Many suggest that the universal practice of the tithe and the failure of attempts to identify its origin in the secular realm point to its divine origin and continuing practice from Adam onward. Others do not trace the practice to Adam, but contend that God gave Abram direct revelation, and "started allover," establishing a new precedent with Abram that was continued by Israel, and presumably today. There are many flaws with this theory.

First, it has already been established that neither Abel's nor Jacob's practices are legitimate paradigms for a biblical tithe. Thus, we are left with only Abram's practice to prove that the tithe was practiced by all God-fearers for the millennia prior to the giving of the Law. This hasty generalization from a single datum of evidence renders the argument very weak.

Second, universality of practice in the secular realm does not prove that God is the originator of the tithe. This is yet another logical non sequitur. It seems far more reasonable that Abraham was not acting by divine mandate, but in accordance with the ancient Near Eastern customs of his day.


83 Landsell, Sacred Tenth, 1:38; Babbs, Law of the Tithe, pp. 24-25. E. B. Stewart further maintains that «divine acceptance. . . is a demonstration of a divine institution" (The Tithe, p. 37). This is a classic example of a non sequitur.


85 This possibility in no wise reduces Israel's religion to a conglomeration of pagan practices that evolved into a final form. God clearly created the OT Jewish legal system by divine fiat, and was by no means bound to pagan customs in his formation of the Law. On the other hand, neither was he obliged to avoid all pagan customs in the formation of the Law. Timothy H. Fisher, for instance, notes that the pagan practice of circumcision predates God's institution of circumcision in Genesis 17 by hundreds of years ("A Study of the Old Testament Tithe," [Th.M. Thesis, Capital Bible Seminary, 1990])
Third, there is no basis for claiming that Israel derived her practice of tithing from Abraham or Jacob. On the contrary, it is clear that "the normative significance of tithing must be considered within the context of the ceremonial law."86 Indeed, both post-pentateuchal injunctions for Israel to pay tithes reference the Law as the impetus for the injunction, not the practice of the patriarchs (Neh 10:36-39; Mal 3:7-10).

Fourth, there is never an appeal to God's nature or to creation as a basis for tithing. How a mere percentage, apart from an explicit command, can take on moral value is impossible to establish.

Fifth and in summary, the hypotheses that the pre-Mosaic tithe had its basis in God's command, God's nature, or God's approval all argue from silence.

Parallels to the Pre-Mosaic Tithe

Another argument against the continuing applicability of the tithe is the simple lack of present-day parallels to the pre-Mosaic practice.

First, Abram's tithe was apparently a one-time act, not a regular giving pattern. There is no record of Abram's return to Melchizedek, and the references to his tithe in the singular in Hebrews 7:4, 6 point to a one-time gift.87

Second, Abram's tithe was made strictly on the spoils of war seized from the coalition of eastern kings. While the Hebrew and Greek texts simply state that Abram made a tithe of "all," this clearly cannot mean he gave Melchizedek a tenth of his entire possessions--Abram surely was not carrying such a percentage of his property on a swift military raid. It seems certain that it was only the spoils on which Abram tithed.

Third, there is no present-day recipient of a tithe that can parallel Melchizedek. The church bears little resemblance to a priest/clan-leader. Furthermore, the usage of the tithe by Melchizedek and the church (missions outreach, etc.) are dissimilar.

We conclude, then, that there is nothing in pre-Mosaic tithing practices to serve as a basis for viewing the tithe as a trans-dispensational

p. 11, n. 1). This issue is also addressed by David G. Barker ("The Old Testament Hebrew Tithe" [Th.M. Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1979], p. 131).


87 Again, Barndollor shows extraordinary carelessness in his exegesis, maintaining in support of a regular tithe that "the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that Melchizedek 'received tithes of Abraham' (Heb. 7:6). The plural number of the word certainly suggests more than one visit by Abraham to Melchizedek for the purpose of the presentation of his tithes to the Lord's high priest" ("Scriptural Tithe," p. 60). While the King James Version does cast the tithe in verse 6 in the plural, and the Greek term for tithe, δεδεκάτωκεν (δεδεκάτωκε in the Majority Text and Textus Receptus), is inconclusive, a simple comparison with verse 4 results in a conclusion opposite Barndollor's.
and thus a continuing principle for the NT church. There is simply no evidence to support the claim.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper leaves the reader with the difficult and perhaps unsatisfying verdict that the pre-Mosaic title did not originate with divine revelation. In fact, the evidence suggests identifying the practice of the patriarch's pagan neighbors as the basis for patriarchal tithing practices. It is only as God placed theological significance on the tithe in Leviticus that the tithe became mandatory and meaningful.

One looks in vain for evidence of proportional giving in the Cain and Abel narrative, finding only a few short verses to even fuel the possibility that any sacrifices at all were given to God apart from expiatory sacrifices. Certainly there is insufficient evidence to support a tithe.

The first OT mention of the tithe is in the context of an extraordinary event with no parallels in the levitical system or today. Instead, it was a dispensational marker heralding the shift from the dispensation of human government to the dispensations of promise. The recipient of Abram's tithe and its purpose have no parallels in NT practice or in the levitical system.

The second OT mention of the tithe is even less helpful, as the promised tithe of Jacob is never said to have been actually paid and the giver has been demonstrated to be unconverted at the time of the vow. The recipient and purpose of Jacob's tithe, if it ever materialized, are cloaked in such obscurity that the identification of any parallels in the present-day or in the levitical system is impossible.

We conclude, therefore, that the pre-Mosaic tithe was merely a culture-bound, voluntary expression of worship reflective of the ancient Near Eastern practice of the time, and adapted by Abraham as a means of expressing gratitude and attributing glory to Yahweh.

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THE GREAT REVERSAL:
THEMATIC LINKS BETWEEN GENESIS 2 AND 3

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The break between Gen 1 and 2 has been discussed at length by many scholars. Umberto Cassuto, for example, has made a clear distinction between the story in Gen 1 and the one recorded in chaps. 2 and 3. Cassuto argues that the first chapter relates "The Story of Creation" to teach us "that the whole world and all that it contains were created by the word of the One God, according to His will, which operates without restraint." The second section, more precisely Gen 2:4-24, is part of the "Story of the Garden of Eden," which stretches to the end of chap. 3; its purpose is "to explain how it is that in the Lord's world, the world of the good and beneficent God, evil should exist and man should endure pain and troubles and calamities."

On the other hand, the unity of chaps. 2 and 3 is generally recognized, although different reasons are given in support of this conclusion. Cassuto bases his argument for the unity of this passage on

1 For example, G. von Rad notes: "The difference is in the point of departure: Whereas in ch. 1 creation moves from the chaos to the cosmos of the entire world, our account of creation [chap. 2] sketches the original state as a desert in contrast to the sown" (Genesis: A Commentary [London: SCM, 1972], 76). Likewise, Claus Westermann states: "The narrative of Gen 1 is characterized by its onward, irresistible and majestic flow that distinguishes it so clearly from the drama narrated in Gen 2-3" (Genesis I-II: A Commentary [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984], 80). David J. A. Clines posits that "while ch. 1 views reality as an ordered pattern which is confused by the flood, chs. 2-3 see reality as a network of elemental unions which become disintegrated throughout the course of the narrative from Eden to the flood" (The Theme of the Pentateuch [Sheffield: JSOT, 1978], 75).


3 Cassuto, 7. For a different view see von Rad, 46: "Faith in creation is neither the basis nor the goal of the declarations in Gen., chs. 1 and 2. Rather, the position of both the Yahwist and the Priestly document is basically faith in salvation and election."

4 A Commentary, 71.
noticeable similarities between certain elements found in the beginning of chap. 2 and at the end of chap. 3.\(^5\) Claus Westermann holds that the idea of the two chapters as an independent and separate narrative was "one of the most important and decisive results of literary criticism."\(^6\) The presence of thematic links between the two chapters has been proposed also by von Rad.\(^7\) David J. A. Clines points to four areas of harmonious relationship in chap. 2 that are disrupted in chap. 3.\(^8\)

In addition to being a literary unit, as seen by the structural and thematic links already noted,\(^9\) these two chapters also show a unity of purpose. The two come together to present the first of many reversals in the Bible.\(^10\) The purpose of this article is to explore this reversal theme in Gen 2 and 3.

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5 Ibid., 159, 169-171. Cassuto argues for linking some passages through common terms; for example, Gen 2:7, 17 to 3:19; Gen 2:25 to 3:7, 21; Gen 2:5, 7 to 3:23; Gen 2:8, 15 to 3:24. Considering the two chapters as a unit, E. A. Speiser calls them "the brief Eden interlude" (*Genesis, AB* [New York: Doubleday, 1981], 18), while G. W. Coats uses the term "Paradise Tale" (*Genesis, with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 28). In their respective studies Derek Kidner (*Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1967], 58) and John Skinner also treat the two chapters as a single unit (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, ICC [Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1951], 1:51.

6 Westermann notes that in consequence "it is but logical to use this same method as a tool for a more exact interpretation of the passage" (186).

7 "The serpent 'which God had made' in ch. 3.1 points back to the creation of the animals in ch. 2.18. The theme of shame in ch. 3.7 ff. is taken up and attached (almost abruptly) to the narrative about the creation of man (2.25)" (von Rad, 100). Also contributing to the discussion is J. T. Walsh, "Genesis 2:46-3:24: A Synchronic Approach," *JBL* 96 (1977): 161-177.

8 "In ch. 3 the relationship of harmony between each of these pairs [man and soil, man and animals, man and woman, man and God, all in chap. 2] is disrupted. The communion between God and the man who breathes God's breath (2:7) has become the legal relationship of accuser and defendant (3:9ff); the relationship of man and woman as "one flesh" (2:24) has soured into mutual recrimination (3:12); the bond of man (adam) with the soil ('adamah') from which he was built has been supplanted by 'an alienation. . .' (3:17 ff.); the harmonious relationship of man with beast in which man is the acknowledged master (2:19 ff.) has become a perpetual struggle of intransigent foes (3:15)" (Clines, 75).

9 On the structure of Gen 2 and 3 see the whole issue of *Semeia* 18 (1980).

The Content of Genesis 1:1-2:3

According to von Rad, Gen 1:1 is the "summary statement of everything that is unfolded step by step in the following verses."\(^1\) The language of the chapter is simple, yet decisive: God's powerful word created the world in such a way that "it was firm, or well established."\(^2\) The creative activity of the first three days parallels that which ensued on the following three, while the Sabbath rest, established on the seventh day, had no counterpart. The structure of Gen 1 follows the pattern: introduction + 3 pairs + climax or conclusion. This structure is visualized in Figure 1.\(^3\) The seventh day, rich with God's blessings, was the climax of God's creative work. In the words of Abraham Heschel, "Last in creation, first in intention, 'the Sabbath is the end of the creation of heaven and earth.'"\(^4\) Everything was declared to be "very good" and no shade of disorder can be traced in the complete Creation Story.

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\(^1\) He also says that the "hidden grandeur of this statement is that God is the Lord of the world" (49). For Westermann the same verse is "a heading that takes in everything in the narrative in one single sentence" (94).

\(^2\) Cassuto derives *ken* (1:30) from the root *kwn* and translates the phrase "and it was firm or an established thing" (34).

\(^3\) On this idea, see Jacques B. Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978). See also W. H. Shea, "The Unity of the Creation Account," *Origins* 5 (1978): 9-38. A structure similar to that proposed in Figure 1 is found in other biblical passages. In Matt 1 the disputed number of 14 generations can best be explained as 7 x 2.

\(^4\) *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1951), 14. Further describing the uniqueness of the Sabbath, V. Hamilton notes: "Silence and stillness once again enter the atmosphere. The mood of the prologue now resurfaces in this epilogue. There is no activity, no noise, no speaking. All that God has willed and designed for his canvas of the universe is now in its place" (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 141). Von Rad contends that "the declarations about a Sabbath at creation contain one of the most remarkable and daring testimonies in the entire priestly document" (61). For Westermann, "the sanctification of the Sabbath institutes an order for humankind according to which time is divided into time and holy time, time for work and time for rest. The work of creation began with three acts of separation" (171).
INTRODUCTION
(Gen 1:1-2)
Summary of the Story

A. FIRST DAY (1:3-5)
   1. Creation of light
   2. Light described as good
   3. Light separated from darkness

B. SECOND DAY (1:6-8)
   1. The Expanse created (heaven)
   2. Waters divided from waters (seas)
   3. Heaven named

C. THIRD DAY (1:9-13)
   1. Dry ground appears (earth)
   2. Grass, plants, and trees created
   3. Vegetation yields seeds according to their kinds

A: FOURTH DAY (1:14-19)
   1. Creation of luminaries
   2. Luminaries described as good
   3. Times divided by luminaries

B: FIFTH DAY (1:20-23)
   1. Creatures fly toward heaven
   2. Creatures move in the seas
   3. Creation blessed

C: SIXTH DAY (1:24-31)
   1. Earth population created
   2. Livestock, ground creatures, and animals made
   3. God creates man in His image and likeness

CLIMAX: THE SEVENTH DAY
(2:1-3)
Unparalleled Blessing

Figure 1. A Structural Outline of the Creation Story in Genesis 1:1-2:3.

The Content of Genesis 2:4-25

After introducing the sinless and fully blessed life on the newly created earth, the Genesis narrator describes the creation of man in retrospect. This crown of all creation was placed in the beautiful garden of Eden, whose main source of blessing was a four-branched river carrying fertility to all the earth, both inside and outside of Eden.

The privileges and responsibilities of the first human being in the garden are stated. The immediate responsibility was to make an inventory of all the animals and give to each a name. This action emphasized man's loneliness. The Creator provided a solution to this problem, and man's pleasant surprise at receiving this gift is recorded.

The first part of the story climaxes in the closing verses of chap. 2 with the description of a happy life of intimacy and innocence. Verse 24 speaks of the union between Adam and Eve which perpetuated their lineage.
The Content of Genesis 3

Gen 3 opens with a new character in the story, one not necessarily unknown to the Genesis narrator's audience. The tempter described as "serpent" deceives the humans in a subtle way.\(^{15}\)

The lengthy persuasion to taste the forbidden fruit culminates in quick action: both Eve and Adam sin.\(^{16}\) The tragic outcome of the transgression was increased by Eve's expectation of becoming a divine being, according to the serpent's promise. Realizing the first results of sin, the couple tried to hide from God.

God informs the man and the woman of the terrible consequences of their fall. His pronouncement of the sentence commences with the serpent, then moves to the woman, and finally to the man. This order of the sentence is reversed from the order of the narrative, forming a small-scale reversal in the story. Then judgment is pronounced and man is expelled from the garden. Von Rad notes that "the penalties go in reverse order to the trial proceedings."\(^{17}\) Finally a celestial guardian is set "to keep the way" to the life-giving tree.

Relationship Between Genesis 2 and 3

A close study of Gen 2, and 3 discloses a carefully-crafted structure.\(^{18}\) The structure is chiastic, since the content of chap. 3 contains a reversed order of similar elements and events found in chap. 2. For the sake of comparison, the two chapters can be divided into four logical parts, each containing distinctive themes. The parts of chap. 3 are in fact reversals of those in chap. 2. Following is a detailed analysis of the structure and meaning of both chapters, stressing the chiastic art of the narrative and showing the great reversal in the story of the Garden of Eden. (The same information is summarized in Figure 2.) When viewed

\(^{15}\) Hebrew, *wehannndhas*. The subject in this sentence precedes the predicate for emphasis.

\(^{16}\) The lengthy dialogue between the serpent and the woman (3:1-6a) is in sharp contrast with the swift action expressed by a succession of four consecutive verbs: took, ate, gave, ate (3:6b), all four preceded by *waw* consecutive.

\(^{17}\) Von Rad, 92. The order of subjects in the beginning of chap. 3 is serpent-woman-man. Then in the trial one finds man-woman-serpent. Lastly in the sentence the order is again serpent-woman-man.

\(^{18}\) The Hebrew root *'rm* found in 2:25 and 3:1 is the best discernible lexical link between two chapters. Says J. T. Walsh: "On a literary level Gen 2:46-3:24 is a highly structured unit" (177).
this way, Gen 2 has no independent structure of its own. If this fact is overlooked, the plan of the chapter can be chronologically misleading.19

*Gen 2:4 An Introductory Verse Alluding to the Reversal*

This introductory verse reminds the reader that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. The emphasis on this fact is expressed by a double repetition. Everything which follows in the first part of the story reported in chap. 2 is traced back to the Creator who is the protagonist of the first part of the drama.

The words in Gen 2:4 are marked by the use of double chiasm. Not only is the subject/verb order reversed ("heaven/earth" and "created" is reversed to "made" and "earth/heaven"), the "heaven/earth" is reversed to "earth/heaven." One should see in these reversals, especially in the second one, an allusion to the reversal on a larger scale in the story as a whole, called in this study "the Great Reversal." The verse further matches the introductory statement of the Creation story in Gen 1:1.

*Part One: A. Created and Settled (Gen 2:5-8); A'. Judged and Expelled (Gen 3:22-24)*

The very beginning of the story of Gen 2 and 3 speaks of innocent and carefree life on earth before man's creation. There was no toil, "no bush of the field," "no plant," no "rain on the earth" (2:5-6). The end of the story (Gen 3:22-24) stresses the opposite. Because of the entrance of sin the man knows both "good and evil."

Whereas before there were "streams" coming up from the earth to water the ground (2:6), after the sin, blessings do not come automatically and man's responsibility is increased (3:23). Thus the beginning of the story declares that "there was no man to work the ground" (2:5), while the end of the story ironically reveals that after the act of sin, man must work the ground (3:23).

19 Westermann finds in "Gen 2-3 repetitions, lack of agreement, lack of balance, gaps in the line of thought, contradictions. One could not expect anything else." These he attributes to "the many-sided process of the formation of this text" (190).
INTRODUCTION

Gen 2:4

A. CREATED AND SETTLED (2:5-8)
1. Innocent, carefree life: no toil, no plants, no rain
2. Streams water the ground
3. No man to work the ground
4. Through breath becomes a living being the tree of life and living forever
5. God plants a garden in the east
6. The man settles in the garden

A'. JUDGED AND EXPELLED (3:22-24)
1. The man knows good and evil
2. The man's responsibility increased
3. There is a man to work the ground
4. The man is prevented from eating of the tree of life and living forever
5. God places cherubim in the east
6. The man expelled from the garden

B. BLESSINGS AND ORDER (2:9-17)
1. Trees and plants pleasing to eye and good for food planted in the grow out of the ground in the garden
2. Blessings related to a river and its four head-waters
3. Havilah's 3-fold blessing: gold, resin, onyx
4. The man to work in the garden and care for it
5. On the day man eats he will die

B'. CURSES AND DISORDER (3:14-21)
1. Thorns and thistles grow out of the ground
2. Curses related to four subjects: animals, woman, man, ground
3. Serpent's 3-fold curse: being cursed, crawling on belly, eating dust
4. In sweat the man tills the cursed ground and eats of it
5. Verdict: Return to the dust

C. WOMAN CREATED (2:18-23)
1. God's concern: Man is alone
2. The man needs a helper
3. God provides a helper
4. Man's lordship over
5. All animals in harmony with man
6. Woman taken from the man
7. Man's admiration for the woman
8. Happy intimate relationship

C'. WOMAN TEMPTED (3:1-13)
1. Man hides from God who still looks for him
2. Together with helper, man is helpless
3. The man blames his helper
4. Man is afraid, naked, hiding
5. An animal deceives the man
6. Woman takes fruit and gives to man
7. Woman's admiration for fruit
8. Fear and shame of naked body

CLIMAX
(2:24-25)
Happiness in sinless and innocent human relationship

Figure 2. The Chiastic Structure of Genesis 2 and 3
The same man who through the breath of life "became a living being" (2:7) is now rendered unable "to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (3:22).

Lastly, the same God who "planted a garden in the east, in Eden" (2:8) now places "on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life" (3:24). Thus the man, who had been created by God and placed in the garden (2:8), is now judged and expelled from it by God (3:23).

Following is a list of the Hebrew words and expressions shared by both sections in the story: yhwh $elohim$, "the Lord God"; ha'adam, "the man"; la "et-ha'adamah, "to work the ground"; hayyim, "life"; gan-b$'$eden miqqedem, "a garden in the east in Eden"; sam, "there."

Part Two:  B. Blessings and Order (Gen 2:9-17);
B’. Curses and Disorder (Gen 3:14-21)

The story continues in section B of Gen 2 (vv. 9-17) with a detailed description of the garden of Eden and its blessings. The trees that God made to grow out of the ground "were pleasing to the eye and good for food" (2:9). After the sin, in section B’ of Gen 3 (vv. 14-21), the narrator reports that the ground produced "thorns and thistles" displeasing to the eye. Thus, two kinds of weed plants take the place of the two trees in the perfect garden.

The blessings of the garden are related to a river flowing from Eden, and its four "headwaters." After the sin, the curses have to do with four subjects: animals (3:14); woman (3:16); man (3:17-19); and ground (3:17). In Gen 2 "the land of Havilah" was decorated with a threefold sign of blessings; "good gold," aromatic resin, and onyx (2:12). In contrast, Gen 3 reveals one of the animals, the serpent, carrying a threefold sign of curse: being cursed above all creatures, crawling on the belly, and eating dust (3:14). The reversal occurred because the human beings once had freedom of eating from any tree except one (2:16-17), yet they dared to eat from the single forbidden tree (3:17); they could eat from only one of these two trees at a time.

Section B closes with a prohibition against eating from that single tree lest one die (2:17), while in section B’, after the sin, the verdict is pronounced: Man will return to the ground out of which he was taken.

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20 Even though the text does not explicitly state that the woman and the man were cursed, the two were deprived of many blessings.
21 "To eat dust" is a Biblical idiom relating to an utmost humiliation and curse (see Psalm 72:9).
The section, however, closes with a ray of hope. First, assurance is given that the line of living human beings will continue (3:20); second, God takes care of the immediate needs of the man and woman by clothing them (3:21).

The following is a list of the Hebrew words and phrases found in both sections: smh (hiphil imperfect), "grow out"; yhwh 'elohim, "the Lord God"; ha'adamah, "the ground"; 'kl... 'es, "eat ... tree"; ro's, "head"; sem, "name"; hlk, "walk"; lqh, "take"; swh, "command"; 'adam ... 'mr, "man . . . said"; lo' to'kal mimmennu, "you shall not eat from it."

Part Three: C Woman Created (Gen 2:18-23)
C. Woman Tempted (Gen 3:1-13)

Section C of Gen 2 (vv. 18-23) focuses on God's concern for man's social needs. The Creator declares that "it is not good for the man to be alone" (2:18). After the sin, however (Section C' of Gen 3:1-13), that same man wants to be alone and hides from God who still looks for him (3:9). Thus the man who had no helper suitable for him (2:20) is now helpless, in spite of having a helper (3:10). God states that he "will make a helper" (2:18), yet now the man blames that very helper whom he affirms God "put here with me" (3:12). Man's superiority and lordship over the livestock, birds, and the beasts (2:20) stands in sharp contrast to the man who is afraid, naked, and trying to hide (3:10). Whereas part C says that all animals were in harmony with man and subject to him (2:19-20), part C' speaks of the man and the woman deceived by an animal and in conflict with it (3:13).

Section C describes the woman as the being "taken out of the man" (2:22), while C' speaks of the same woman in an active role, taking some fruit and giving to the man (3:6). Man's admiration for the woman (2:23) is replaced by her admiration for the forbidden fruit (3:6). Whereas before the man was in an intimate relationship with the woman-bone to bone, flesh to flesh (2:23)--now man and woman are ashamed and afraid (3:7-8).

The following is a list of words and phrases common to both sections: yhwh 'elohim, - "the Lord God"; ha'adam, "the man"; 'sh, "make"; qr'... ha'adam lo, "the man called it"; lqh, "take"; issah, "woman", is, "man."

22 Hebrew 'ezer k'negdo is found twice in section C (2:18, 20).
The Climax of Sinless Life (Gen 2:24-25)

The climax of the Story of Creation was reached when God rested on the seventh day (2:2-3). The climax of the story of the Garden of Eden focuses on man's relationship to other human beings, beginning with the family unit. The climax speaks of a sinless, harmonious and happy human life in all its innocence.23 A supernatural unity is related here in which two beings are able to become basar 'ehad, "one flesh" (2:24).

Summary

A structural study of chaps. 2 and 3 of the book of Genesis reveals the presence of a chiasm in the narrative and strongly suggests the unity of the story as argued by scholars. The theme of the story of the Garden of Eden is the Great Reversal brought about by the entrance of sin into the world created by God.24 Clines affirms that “the flood is only the final stage in a process of cosmic disintegration which began in Eden.”25

The presence of the chiastic structure or reversed parallelism presents the literary beauty of Genesis through a story that teaches how God was the source of creation in all its perfection, while the disorder was brought about by man's act of sin. Elsewhere the Bible teaches that the last cosmic reversal in history will be God's reversal.

23 Ibid, where v. 25 is called "The climax of the creation."
24 "Expressed more concisely, Gen. ch. 3, asserts that all sorrow (von Rad, 101).
comes from sin"
25 Clines, 75.
GENESIS 1-3 AND THE MALE/FEMALE ROLE RELATIONSHIP

MICHAEL F. STITZINGER

An examination of certain considerations in Genesis 1-3 contributes to a proper view of a hierarchical distinction between male and female. Genesis 1 primarily emphasizes the relationship of spiritual equality. Genesis 2 focuses upon the positional distinction in the area of function. Contrary to the feminist position, several indications reveal that a hierarchical relationship exists prior to the fall of mankind. The New Testament consistently upholds this same relationship between male and female. Genesis 3 indicates that the sexes reversed their respective roles with their fall into sin. An aspect of the curse that is subsequently placed upon the woman is Genesis 3:16b, which indicates that sin affected the hierarchical relationship, but did not disannul it. The "desire" of the woman provides a reminder to all women that the subordinate role still remains as her correct posture. As a consequence of sin, man will often abuse his headship, exercising his "rule" harshly over the woman. Together, the first 3 chapters of Genesis consistently argue for a continuing hierarchical order between male and female.

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INTRODUCTION

ONE of the most important subjects of our day is that of the role of women. Our society is in the midst of a sexual revolution. Increasing confusion has developed about our identities as men and women. A diminishing influence of the Judeo-Christian heritage, the rise of the feminist movement, and pressure for the Equal Rights Amendment have called into question traditional understandings of sexual roles. This has created great uncertainty in our contemporary situation both inside and outside of the church about what it means.
to be a man or a woman. As John Davis observes, "The proper roles of men and women in marriage and family, in the church, and in the wider society are the subject of an ongoing debate that has touched us all."2

Under the guise of the term "evangelical," many current writers are advocating positions that are acceptable to the women's liberation movement. Individuals such as Paul Jewett,3 Virginia Mollenkott,4 Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty,5 Don Williams,6 and Patricia Gundry7 have suggested similar arguments in support of egalitarianism. This understanding of Scripture provides a very real threat to the traditional hierarchical view of male and female.

There is a great need for a proper understanding of the respective roles God has established for man and woman. This study will examine certain considerations in Genesis 1-3 which contribute to an understanding of a hierarchical distinction between male and female.

FEMINIST CLAIMS AND THE CREATION ACCOUNT

No one denies that the apostle Paul used the creation account to support his claims for a subordinate position of the woman. In both 1 Cor 11:9 and 1 Tim 2:13, Paul specifically appeals to the fact that Adam was created before Eve.

Rather than accept this as a divinely inspired commentary on the creation order, Paul's teaching about women is viewed as a result of cultural conditioning and providing no application for the 20th century. According to the "evangelical" feminists, there is no role distinction.

Herein lies the heart of the issue. The feminist advocates have taken the liberty to reconstruct the creation account of Genesis in order to argue for complete egalitarianism. Fellowship and equality are said to be the main purposes for God's creation of the male and female (Gen 1:26-30). Any suggestion of subordination prior to the

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2Ibid.
5Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be* (Waco: Word, 1974).
fall is disregarded. For this reason, any hierarchy of relationships in
Genesis 2 (Gen 2:15-24) is de-emphasized. Not until the perfect
relationship of Genesis 1 was shattered in chapter 3 is there any
suggestion of subjection. When subjection did come about, it was
only a temporary measure that ceased with redemption. The work of
Christ again provided the basis for complete egalitarianism.
Individuals such as Jewett and Mollenkott have de-emphasized
Genesis 2 in order to establish positional equality from chapter 1 as
the standard for both chapters. The account of Genesis 1 is much
more general and does not explain any hierarchical relationship that
may exist between male and female. Thus, it could allow for complete
equality between the sexes. Mollenkott states:

I suggest that if religious leaders want to maintain any credibility with
the younger members in their congregations, they had better shift their
emphasis from the "Adam first, then Eve" creation story of Genesis
Two to the simultaneous creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis One.8

It appears that Mollenkott assumes a contradiction between Genesis
1 and 2 which allows her to disregard the latter.

Jewett also holds to this view by his designation of a "partner-
ship model," instead of the hierarchical arrangement in Genesis 2.9 In
this account, man and woman are understood to relate to each other
as functional equals whose differences are mutually complementary in
all spheres of life and human endeavor.10 This does not parallel
Genesis 2, however, unless the essential meaning of this latter chapter
is altered. Jewett accomplishes this by understanding the central
theme of chapter 2 to be that the woman's creation from man "is to
distinguish her from the animals by implying her essential likeness" to
the man.11 Genesis 3, in turn, reveals the first mention of the woman's
subordination to man as a punishment of the fall.12 While these
alterations result in what seems to be a fairly consistent interpretation
of the three chapters, they do not adequately consider what is being
stated. When the creation accounts are allowed to speak for them-
selves, a positional distinction becomes quite clear.

8Mollenkott, "The Woman's Movement Challenges The Church," 307; Jewett
("Mary and the Male/Female Relationship," Christian Century 90 [1973] 1255) states
much the same idea: "I have come to reject this whole approach as contrary to the
fundamental thrust of Scripture. The first creation narrative contains no hint of female
subordination, and the second, which speaks of the creation of the woman from the
man, does not say what it has traditionally been interpreted to mean. . . ."
9Jewett, Man As Male And Female, 14.
10Ibid.
11Ibid., 126.
12Ibid., 22, 114.
The emphasis of Genesis 1 is altogether different from that of Genesis 2. A chronological method is employed to express the creative events as they develop—day one, day two, etc. Mankind is first mentioned in the account of the sixth day; "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness'" (Gen 1:26). The creation of man and woman was distinct from all that was created prior to them. As the crown of creation, they were to exercise supremacy over the cosmos. On a scale of ascending order, God created the highest of all his handiwork last.13

Genesis 1 gives only a general statement of the details surrounding the creation of male and female. Both are described as though created simultaneously (Gen 1:26). In addition, God gave both of them the commands to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule" over the earth (Gen 1:28). In these verses, two relationships are addressed: the ontological or spiritual realm as man relates to his Creator, and the economic or functional realm regarding his specific duties upon earth.

There is also no elaboration of the functional relationship of the male and female in this account. Some have thus concluded that both male and female share equally in position with regard to the commands of responsibility. Two areas of function are evident, however. 1) Being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth include responsibilities toward each other. 2) Subduing and ruling over the earth emphasize obligations with regard to the created universe. It is not clear from this account whether or not each was given equal status to exercise their responsibility. There is nothing to suggest hierarchical relationship, but there is also nothing to deny it. These details remain incomplete without the further revelation given in Genesis 2.

Spiritual equality

The thrust of the creation account of male and female in Genesis 1 appears to be that they were made in the image (ἐσώτερος) and likeness (μοιάς) of God (Gen 1:26-27). These terms are best regarded as essentially synonymous.14 There is no distinction made between the male and female in this regard. For this reason, the use of the word "man" (ἀνὴρ) is significant in these two verses.15 ἄνὴρ is here being

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13Clarence J. Vos, Women in Old Testament Worship (Delft: Judels and Brinkman, 1968) 17; John Murray (Collected Writings of John Murray [Edinburgh: Banner Of Truth Trust, 1977], 2.5) states, "That man's creation is the last in the series, we may regard as correlative with this lordship."

14Davis, Paradise to Prison (Winona Lake: BMH, 1975) 81.

15The use of ἄνηρ is important in determining the spiritual relationship between God and mankind and in distinguishing between the positional roles of man and
used corporately and generically of the human pair, or species. As Jewett points out, "man" in this instance is "dual" ("male," and "female," created he them.) Both the male and the female comprise mankind, and in this respect they are of corresponding value before God (cf. Gen 5:1-2; 9:6; Matt 19:4).

The image of God

The image has to do with the ontological or spiritual qualities, namely, the communicable attributes that man and woman reflect from God. This is best understood as a moral, not a physical, likeness. The image of God is usually understood to include the will or freedom of choice, self-consciousness, self-transcendence, self-determination, rationality, moral discernment for good and evil, righteousness, holiness, and worship. Basically, it is that which makes men "persons.

The statements of Gen 1:26-27 assert that the woman is an equal participant with the man in respect to the image of God. The NT continues to uphold this doctrine of the equality of the image. The Apostle Peter indicates that a woman must be granted "honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life" (1 Pet 3:7).

Thus far, the feminists, by an argument from silence, may be correct in supporting complete positional equality. However, this equality can only be certain to exist in the spiritual realm. There is simply no information in this chapter regarding the functional relationship of man and woman. The feminists argue that the spiritual equality presented here is proof against a distinction in role relationships. They fail to recognize, however, that spiritual equality does not prohibit a distinctiveness in role relationships.

woman. is used in the first chapters of Genesis in three ways. (1) It is used generically to refer to man as a race, species, as mankind or humankind. In this way, with or without the article refers to both male (רַע) and female (נֶפֶשׁ) (cf. Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-2 and 9:6). (2) It is a) used to refer to the individual man (שָׁם), as in Gen 2:5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25; 3:9, 20; or b) to designate both the individual man and woman (man, שָׁם and woman, נֶפֶשׁ), as in Gen 3:22-24. The article is used in every case except 2:5, 20. This is used when denoting the functional realm. (3) is also used to designate the proper name, "Adam." This occurs in Gen 2:20; 3:17, 21; 4:25. This usage is always without the article.

17Jewett, Man As Male And Female, 39.
18Charles L. Feinberg, "The Image Of God," BSac 129 (1972) 246; see also Gordon H. Clark, "The Image Of God In Man," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 12 (1969) 215-22; Murray, Collected Writings, 2. 3-13,34-36. Murray also includes the body as part of the image.
191 Cor 11:7; Gal 3:28; Col 3:10; Eph 4:24; James 3:9.
Further expansion of the events of the sixth day is revealed in Genesis 2. The new revelation given in this chapter focuses mainly on the functional aspect of man and woman, rather than the image. The account relates the duties and relationships God commanded the first man and woman to maintain toward each other and creation. Man was commanded to cultivate and keep the garden (2:15). Various stipulations about the eating of the fruit were given (2: 16-17). He also named the animals, which helped to convey to him that he had no one like himself to help him in his tasks (2: 18-20). The woman was created sometime after this on the same day (2:21-22). The man subsequently named his wife "woman" as a derivative of himself. It seems apparent from the development of man's purpose that a hierarchical relationship does exist in man's functional realm. The account assumes this rather than states it directly. Still, however, the evangelical feminists refuse to allow for anything but complete egalitarianism.

Evangelical feminist claims

Feminists have a unified opposition to interpreting Genesis 2 as teaching subordination. Gundry reflects upon this passage, stating that

The fact that Adam is spoken of in Genesis 2 as having been created first, . . . does not argue for his being superior in authority. . . . God created living things in an ascending order of complexity. If order of creation means anything, it would have to mean Eve was superior because she was last.20

In similar fashion, Jewett makes three fundamental claims about this chapter. First, he claims that to assume any type of hierarchy of man over woman also means that the male is superior to the female.21 Second, the superiority over the animals and not the woman's inferiority (in function) to the man is the basic thought of the context.22 She is shown, by this fact, to be in the same likeness as Adam. Third, the fact that the woman was created after man demonstrates, if anything, that "woman is superior to the man."23 His reasoning is that man's creation is the highest event in all the work of

20Gundry, *Woman Be Free!*, 23; also p. 61, "No indication of man's position of authority appears until after the fall."
22Ibid., 126.
23Ibid., 126-27.
creation. He is superior to all that proceeded. The woman came after
the man and thus, she is even higher in importance than he. He goes
on to say that, "If men do not find this conclusion palatable let them
ask themselves why women should stomach the rabbinic conclusion
that the woman is inferior because created after man." 24

Virginia Mollenkott interprets the creation account to provide
for positional equality by the "rang technique." 25 She tries to demon-
strate that the objective of chapter 2 is the same as that of chapter 1;
mankind is the masterpiece of creation. By the "rang technique" she
means that chapter 1 discloses man as the zenith of creation by a
chronological fashion (Gen 1:26-27). Chapter 2 also demonstrates
man to be the zenith of creation by placing his creation "in the most
emphatic positions: the first (Gen 2:5, 7) and final (Gen 2:22)." 26
She proceeds to emphasize the stress of chapter 2 as an equality
in "relationship." Adam instantly recognizes Eve as different from the
animals and exactly like himself. The development of chapter 2
provides no basis for hierarchy whatsoever. Mollenkott is correct
insofar that both accounts emphasize that man is the zenith of
creation. However, her use of the "rang technique" in chapter 2 fails
to address certain indications that support a hierarchical relationship.
All three of these writers are guilty of neglecting contextual
evidence within Genesis 2 itself. Chapters 1 and 2 make use of the
important Semitic historiographical principle known as recapitula-
tion. Genesis 1 gives a short statement summarizing the entire crea-
tion of man. The second chapter follows with a more detailed and
circumstantial account dealing with matters of special importance. 27
While Genesis 2 harmonizes with Genesis 1, it must not be expected
to report the events identically. Moses stipulates the concept of
equality of image in chapter 1 but presumes it in chapter 2. He
proceeds to emphasize the function of man, and in his expansion he
assumes a hierarchical relationship.

Gundry and Jewett have suggested that because the woman is
created last in Genesis 2 she may be positionally superior to the man.

24Ibid.
26Ibid.
27Gleason L. Archer, A Survey of Old Testament Introduction (Chicago: Moody,
1964) 118. "There is, however, an element of recapitulation involved, for the creation of
the human race is related all over again (cf. Gen 2:7 and 1:26, 27). But this technique of
recapitulation was widely practiced in ancient Semitic literature. . . . To the author of
Genesis 1, 2, the human race was obviously the crowning or climactic product of
creation, and it was only to be expected that he would devote a more extensive
treatment to Adam after he had placed him in his historical setting (the sixth day of
creation)."
Chronologically, it may be granted that there is an ascending order in chapter 1, with mankind as the zenith of creation. However, it is conjecture to argue that this ascending order extends into the events within each particular day. To assume that the events of the sixth day, which culminate in the creation of the woman, are chronologically ascending in importance cannot be substantiated.\(^{28}\)

**Role distinctions**

There are several internal factors in Genesis 2 which suggest a hierarchical relationship in which the woman, by virtue of her place in creation and the God-ordained structure of events, is in a position of subordination. Hierarchy is not directly stated but is implied by many duties and obligations that the man exercises. It is a non sequitur to conclude, as Jewett has, that for the woman to be subordinate would be to make her inferior in value, ability, or as a human being. The man's headship over woman is solely a position of rank. The man owes this authoritative preeminence to God's appointment rather than to personal achievement.\(^{29}\) There are several indications which point definitely and consistently to a role distinction.

**Signs of headship**

First, v 7 stipulates that man was created prior to the woman. Second, the man was designated as "Adam" (Gen 2:20幔ָא), which was also the term used to describe the entire race!\(^{30}\) That the man was given this name and not the woman suggests that he occupies the position as head of the relationship. Third, the events of the narrative reveal that Adam was invested with his position of leadership, responsibility, and authority prior to the creation of Eve (Gen 2:15). He was commanded to "cultivate" and "keep" the garden. He was also restricted from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Fourth, Adam immediately began to exercise his authority by naming the animals (Gen 2: 10).\(^{31}\) Motyer notes that, "To give a name


\(^{30}\)Man is designated such by several different words. He is called מָא --"man-kind," בָּא --"the male," מָא --"the man," מָא --"Adam," and מָא "man."

\(^{31}\)Ps 8:5-9 also substantiates the claims of man's investiture of leadership (cf. Heb 2:6-8). While man (שָּׁוָא, Ps 8:5) most likely refers to mankind (Gen 1:26), v 7 supports fully the leadership that man was given in Genesis 2. Adam was assigned or caused (לְתוֹלֲשׁ) to rule over the works, flocks, cattle, birds, and fish. David could very well have in view man's positional leadership given and exercised prior to the woman's creation.
is the prerogative of a superior, as when Adam exercised his dominion over the animals. . . "

Fifth, Adam's leadership role is designated by his need of a helper (Gen 2:18, 20--כָּנַנְו). The expression used to describe the type of person Adam needed is "a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18, 20--כָּנַנְו). The particular usage of כָּנַנְו, "helper," in this chapter has generated considerable debate. Sixteen out of the twenty-one usages in the Old Testament refer to God as a superior helper assisting the needs of man. The remaining three refer to men helping other men. In each of the latter instances, man's help is ineffectual. It is unlikely that the helper referred to here (Gen 2:18, 20) is "corresponding to" or "suitable to" Adam in nature and ability. The term "helper" is generally agreed to be a designation of position. With this in mind, Scanzoni and Hardesty have suggested that the "helper" referred to is a superior, just as God is a superior helper to man. However, this suggestion neglects the context of the passage. The kind of helper proposed in Genesis 2 is not a divine helper but a human helper. Another suggestion is that the woman helper is equal in rank with man. In arguing for this view, Vos takes כָּנַנְו to mean "counterpart" or "corresponding to" in position.

However, in view of other contextual indications suggesting positional superiority of the man, it cannot be argued consistently that "corresponding to" refers to a complete equality of position. The most consistent and harmonious answer is found when the helper proposed for man is understood as positionally subordinate in function to man. Until this time, all of man's help was superior. However, man had a specific need for a human helper. The divine helper supplied this need by designing for him a subordinate human

33 *BDB*, 740.
34 See Gen 2:18, 20; Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26, 29; Pss 20:3; 33:20; 70:6; 89:20; 115:9, 10, II; 121:1, 2; 124:8; 146:4; Isa 30:5; Ezek 12:14; Dan 11:34; Hos 13:9.
35 *BDB*, 617.
36 Scanzoni and Hardesty, *All We're Meant To Be*, 26; George W. Knight III (*The New Testament Teaching On The Role Relationship Of Men And Women* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977] 43) refutes Scanzoni and Hardesty: "This argument cannot be valid. Cannot a word, however, have a different nuance when applied to God than it does when applied to humans?"
helper who would aid him in obeying the commands.39 This woman, who was to be voluntarily submissive to man in function, would "correspond to" or be "suitable to him" spiritually, physically, mentally, and in ability.40

Sixth, man's headship is unveiled when he names his wife "woman" (אשה--Gen 2:23).41 Prior to this point man gave names to all the birds and cattle. Now the dominion that God gave to Adam comes to expression again as he exercises authority in designating his helper's name. In conjunction with this name, Adam also titles his wife אשה in Gen 3:20, and specifies her function as "the mother of all living." These actions give further evidence of his authority.

Some, such as Cassuto, do not identify any parallel between these texts (Gen 2:23; 3:20), but view Gen 3:20 as the beginning of headship.42 Coming just after the post-fall decree in 3: 16, "and he shall rule over thee," it evidences man's first act of rule over his wife. However, it seems more likely that the authority exercised here is not a new act, but parallels the same type of authority exerted by Adam when he named her "woman."

Seventh, man's leadership is demonstrated by the fact that he is to leave his mother and father and cleave to his new wife (Gen 2:24). These acts are read by some as a point of weakness and inferiority on the part of the man.43 To read this as the man's weakness, however, is

39Although it is not mentioned in the account, it is obvious that the woman's physical makeup is different from that of a man. God gave her a physical constitution that is inherent to her role as a helper and a complement to the man.

40Submission must not be confused with inferiority. As a helper, Eve was equal to Adam in capability and value but appointed to a subordinant position by God. She was to voluntarily place her abilities under the man. Martha E. Rehn ("Did Paul Require Women to Wear Veils in the Church? An Exegetical Study of I Corinthians 11:2-16" [M.A. Thesis, Capital Bible Seminary, 1978] 55) states, "Eve was, nevertheless, created to meet Adam's needs and to assist him in his life and purpose. Her capabilities are not a factor in her subordinant role to man. It is by virtue of the fact she was added to his life that she must be submissive-because she was created to assist and be a companion to him."

41Six different words are used to refer to the woman in the first three chapters; גוי--"mankind," נשים--"female," עשה--"helper," אשה--"woman," אשת--"Eve," and נפש--"counterpart to."

42U. Cassuto (A Commentary on the Book of Genesis [2 Vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961], 1. 170) states, "To me it seems that the elucidation is to be sought in the fact that the giving of a name, . . . was considered an indication of lordship. Since the Lord God decreed that he [the husband] should rule over her he assigns a name to her as a token of his rulership."

43Vos, Women in Old Testament Worship, 18, n. 25 states, "... it is the man who cleaves (dabaq) to the woman and usually with regard to persons the lesser cleaves to the greater (Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; Josh 22:5; 23:8; Ruth 1:14; 2 Sam 20:2; 2 Kings 18:6)."
to overlook the major significance of the verse. This is not Adam's declaration but God's pronouncement (Matt 19:4-5) instituting the first marriage. The proper emphasis of leaving and cleaving is not headship as much as it is to demonstrate the complete identification of one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits. This new unity of Adam with his wife is to be closer than it would be with a father and mother. It is important to notice that God addresses the man and not the woman to accomplish this activity (Eph 5:21). He is placing the responsibility primarily upon Adam (and his male descendants) as he has done thus far with other commands. Rather than a sign of weakness this appears to be a sign of leadership on Adam's part.

The final indication of the headship of the man is found in Gen 3:9, 11. The Lord addresses and receives a response from the man, who is the spokesman for the relationship. This factor suggests strongly, if not conclusively, that the man was the head of the relationship.44

The importance of Genesis 2 must not be underestimated. Revealed to man are the keys of creation order. A thorough analysis of its contents argues for a hierarchical relationship between the man and the woman.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND CREATION ORDER

On several significant occasions, the NT recognizes or refers directly to Gen 2:18ff as supporting a role distinction between the male and female. First, Paul asserts that man is the head (κύριος) over the woman in I Cor 11:3. The meaning of "head" in v 3 is indicative of man's "rank" over the woman rather than "source" or "origin."45 His statement is not ascribing a deficiency in intellect or ability of the woman, but is designating her to a subordinate position in function.

Paul substantiates his comments in a relationship more basic than the creation account, namely, the economic aspect of the

44Gen 3:17 could as well be used as a proof of Adam's headship. Adam is condemned for listening and following the voice of his wife to commit an act he knew was wrong. In doing so, he inverted the role of leadership that was initially established for him to fulfill.

45BAG, 431; Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897), 2. 761-62; see the following: Deut 28:13, 44; 32:42; Judg 10:18; 11:8,9, II; 2 Sam 22:44; I Kings 8:1; 21:12; 2 Kings 2:3, 5; I Chron 23:24; Pss 18:43; 110:6; Isa 7:8, 9; Jer 31:7; Lam 1:5; Dan 2:38; Hab 3:13.

46F. F. Bruce, 1 and 2 Corinthians (New Century Bible; Greenwood: Attic, 1971) 103; Colin Brown, "Head," NIDNTT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 2. 160.
Trinity. The Son is God as the Father is God ontologically (John 5:18-23; 10:30; 20:20). However, economically (in function) the Son's redemptive work involved a volitionally subordinate position or rank (I Cor 15:28; John 4:24; 5:18-19).

Further support is derived from the creation account itself. "Man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake; but woman for the man's sake" (I Cor 11:8, 9; cf. 1 Tim 2:13). The time and purpose of the woman's creation is significant in Genesis 2. She was created as a co-laborer to share in the mandates of creation. From the very first, however, she was to participate as a subordinate in rank.

At the same time that Paul establishes a role relationship, he is careful to include a caution, lest men pervert their designated leadership into spiritual superiority and functional snobbery (I Cor 11:11). Spiritually, man and woman remain equal before God (cf. Gen 1:26-27). The Apostle may also have in mind the role distinctions manifested in various functions between the sexes. A woman can and often does assist men in advice, counsel, and guidance in the home, church, and society. However, she is never to take on the role of a leader over men. "In the Lord" she will retain her subordinate role as she shares in these responsibilities.

A man must remember that he is not independent of the woman just because he is superior in rank (1 Cor 11:12). He needs her help even to gain existence in this life. Thus, God has established a mutual dependency to coincide with the headship that man continues to exercise over the woman.47

Second, the apostle makes use of the term "to be subject" (ὑποτάσσω) to describe the relationship of the female to the male both in and outside the context of marriage (1 Cor 14:34-35; Eph 5:21, 22, 24; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11-14; Titus 2:5). The term "to be subject" from the verb τάσσω, has a background in military usage, namely, that soldiers were appointed or placed in positions under others. "Ὑποτάσσω carries the meaning "to place under," "to affix under" or "to subordinate oneself to the control of another."48 However, this word in no way implies that the subordinate is an inferior, except in position. A woman may be superior to a man in ability, personality and even spirituality, but because of the divine order of creation, she recognizes the superior rank of the man and "ranks herself under man."49 This principle is to demonstrate itself

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47 Contra Williams. The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church, 67-68; Scanzoni and Hardesty, All We're Meant To Be, 28-31.
both in the marriage relationship, and/or outside of marriage to various extents. In all of these texts, Paul alludes in principle, if not in actuality, to the creation account to substantiate his claims. A final support for a role distinction is expressed in 1 Pet 3:1, 5-7. Concurring with Paul, Peter uses the term "submission" to describe the position of a wife toward her husband. While he does not refer to creation, he does use the example of Sarah's relationship to Abraham. It is fairly certain that her relationship to Abraham stems from the divine order of creation in Gen 2:18-24. Furthermore, while Peter discloses the wife as the "weaker vessel" in rank, he also maintains that she is spiritually an equal ("fellow-heir of the grace of life," 1 Pet 3:7).

A significant contrast sheds light upon the role relationship of Abraham and Sarah and that of Adam and Eve. In Gen 3:17, Adam is condemned by God for "listening to" or "obeying" the voice of his wife (וּנָאֵם). In Gen 21:12, Abraham is told to "listen to" or "obey" (הִנָּאֵם) the voice of Sarah. Peter indicates that Sarah was submissive to her husband, calling him "lord." The use of the verb "obey" to condemn and condone the same activity poses an apparent contradiction. This contrast is explained when the total picture is examined.

Two different conditions are presented in these contexts. It is suggested that Eve received her knowledge of the command not to eat of the fruit through the instruction of her husband.50 Eve's encouragement to her husband to partake of the fruit was an act of insubordination. Furthermore, when Adam chose to eat of the fruit, he ignored his leadership role and followed his wife's sinful promptings. God's condemnation of Adam for obeying his wife is justified. It should not be concluded from this passage that men must reject the voice of their wives in all situations.

Gen 21:12 provides a blueprint for the correct role relationship between husband and wife. Abraham was distressed at the thought of expelling Hagar and Ishmael.51 Sarah realized the full implications of not expelling them, however, and thus encouraged her husband along these lines. When Abraham's mind would not be changed, God corrected him by telling him to listen to the voice of his wife. The key is found in that once Abraham was corrected by the Lord, he took the initiative to exert leadership (v 14). Unlike Adam, he did not ignore his role as head of the relationship and follow a course of

50 The account in Gen 2:16-17 indicates that man was given the prohibitions prior to the creation of Eve.
cognizant error prompted by his wife. Sarah can thus be viewed by Peter as a woman who "obeyed her husband, calling him lord," yet provided advice in a submissive role.

From these examples, it is rather obvious that the NT supports a role distinction between the male and female, a distinction which originates before the fall. On certain occasions, the concept is applied to the husband and wife relationship; on other occasions, Paul refers generally to the male and female. In both cases, however, a role relationship exists to differing extents in which the woman is instructed to be submissive in function to the male.

**GENESIS 3**

A final claim of the feminists is that subordination for the woman began as a result of the fall. Yet, examination of the text has demonstrated that subordination was established prior to the fall. The events of chapter 3 follow immediately after and are predicated upon the events of chapter 2. They reveal that man and his new helper reversed their hierarchical positions in their act of sin. The outcome was that the effect of sin corrupted the relationship between man's headship and woman's subordination, but did not change it.

*Woman's part in the fall*

The woman was an active participant in the fall. Her initial sin began when she continued to listen to the serpent, who was intentionally deceptive by his communication. During the course of the conversation the woman was deceived (Gen 3:13). It was at this point that her appetites gave birth to the first sin.

The deception of the woman is of major significance for Paul's NT teaching. In 2 Cor 11:3, Paul warns the Corinthian believers "lest as the serpent deceived (ἐκπάτησεν) Eve by his craftiness" they would be deceived also. The use of ἐκ is added to ἀπατάω for intensity, i.e., Eve was completely deceived. Paul is stressing that Eve was led to believe something that was not true. She was doctrinally beguiled into hostility toward God and sensual desire for the unknown. This same deception could happen to both men and women at Corinth.

Paul also uses the term in 1 Tim 2:14, where he states, "It was not Adam who was deceived but the woman being quite deceived, fell

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into transgression."\(^{54}\) This statement is made as a supporting argu-
ment for the limitations given to women with regard to positions of
leadership in the church. In contrast to Paul's appeal in I Corin-
thians, the deception described in I Timothy could only happen to
women.

The apostle may have had more than one idea in mind by this
mention of the woman's deception in I Tim 2:14. He may be
suggesting that a woman's emotional faculties are different than
man's in such a way that she is more apt to be led into a course of
unintentional error,\(^{55}\) and/or he may be using this verse as an
argument for what her deception precipitated, namely, a usurpation
of her role as a helper.

In either case, Gen 3:1-7 indicates that Eve allowed herself to
listen to the serpent. In the course of this, she was deceived and
subsequently sinned. She then introduced her husband to sin, who
willfully ignored his headship and partook of the fruit. Eve's sin was
disobedience to God, which expressed itself, in part, by a self-
assumed position of leadership above her husband.

**Man's part in the fall**

The woman is often viewed as forcing, driving, or compelling her
husband to eat. It is true that Adam participated in the sin because of
his wife's offer (Gen 3:6); however, he was not forced to eat the fruit.
The account does not reveal whether Adam was present, passively
listening to the serpent, or if he was away at the time. V 17 declares
that he "listened to" or "obeyed"\(^{56}\) the voice of his wife prior to eating
the fruit, which may indicate that he was not there initially. In either
circumstance, v 17 is the key; Adam freely chose to obey the voice of
his wife. This sin actually began at the point when he failed to
exercise his position of leadership over his wife.\(^{57}\) While Adam was
not deceived, his action was equally as wicked as Eve's. Not until he
sinned was the entire human race plunged into sin (Rom 5:19; I Cor
15:22). The sin of the first human beings was a direct violation of

\(^{54}\) Using a contrast, Paul states that Adam was \(\text{o} \underline{\text{u}} \text{k} \ \text{t} \underline{\text{a} \pi \alpha \tau \iota \theta \eta} \) (was not deceived--a
simplex usage) while Eve \(\text{e} \underline{\text{x}} \alpha \pi \alpha \tau \iota \sigma \sigma \) (was completely deceived-intense usage).

1859), 4. 254.

\(^{56}\) BDB, 1034: \(\text{r} \underline{\text{h} \rho \psi} \) with the \(\text{r} \) as in Gen 3:17 is a common idiom for "to obey."

\(^{57}\) Young (Genesis 3 [London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966] 130-31) takes Adam's
forfeiture of position a step further. Not only did Adam place himself in a subordinate
position under the woman, but "he listened to her when she was deceived by the
serpent. Hence, Adam had abandoned his place of superiority over the creatures."
God's command, which expressed itself, in part, by a complete inversion of the roles. This was a total distortion of the pattern established in Genesis 1 and 2.

Some background to Genesis 3:16

Another verse showing a positional differentiation between man and woman is Gen 3:16, "Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Most liberals and evangelical feminists interpret this pronouncement as the beginning of female subordination. Conservatives generally prefer to assume that subjection was intensified to the point of servitude at this point.\(^{58}\)

Gen 3:16 cannot be treated in a vacuum. Much of the preceding context deals with the headship of the man. The first section of this chapter demonstrates a reversal of the roles. This will have some bearing on the meaning of v. 16. It should also be noted that this verse comes in the middle of the curse section. This pronouncement is basically divided into 4 areas: the curse upon the serpent (3:14-15), the woman (3:16), the man (3:17-19), and the creation (3:17b). The curse placed certain alterations upon individuals, animals, and nature. Biologically, woman became the recipient of increased pain in childbirth; the snake began to crawl on his belly; all individuals became participants in physical death; nature received agricultural and other changes (Rom 8:22); and man had to compete against nature by toil and sweat.

Spiritually, man and woman became depraved and alienated from God, shattering the perfect harmony that existed at the beginning of their marriage. In some fashion, sin impinged upon the hierarchical relationship as well. It is not evident from any passage after Gen 3:16 that the pronouncement made here canceled or changed the hierarchical arrangement (cf. 1 Cor 11:3-10; 14:34; 1 Tim 2:13-14). In light of this background, a thorough examination of this verse provides for its proper understanding.

Much controversy has surrounded the meaning of "desire" in v. 16. "Desire" (נָפָשׁ) may be derived from the Arabic root safq.\(^{59}\) Traditionally, safqa has had the meaning of "to please, delight, longing, craving, desire, arouse, yearn or desire ardently."\(^{60}\) From this Arabic derivation, scholars usually understand


\(^{59}\) BDB, 1003.

\(^{60}\) Hans Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Ithaca: Spoken Language Services, 1971) 493.
the "desire" to contribute positively to her husband's rule. On the
other hand, "desire" may have come from the Arabic root *saqa*[^61],
which means "to drive, urge on, herd, impel as one would a prisoner
or control cattle."[^62] It envisions harsh, forcible and negative treat-
ment upon the receiver. If this is the meaning, then the "desire" of the
woman will not contribute to the rule of her husband.

A further complication exists with the Hebrew root (*קְוָר*),
because there are no examples in verbal form found anywhere in
Scripture. It has been hypothetically drawn by the lexicons from the
Arabic possibilities. Outside of Gen 3:16, there are only two other
usages of the noun *הָבָלָה* in the OT (Gen 4:7; Cant 7:10). Thus, the
usage of the word must be established by the context in which it
is found.

*Canticles* 7:11. "Desire" in Cant 7:11 (*הָבָלָה*) is expressed by the
bride toward her spouse. The "desire" is primarily a physical one,[^63] or
possibly a desire that is all-encompassing (sexual, mental, and emo-
tional). The context surrounding this word argues against it being
derived from the Arabic root *saqa* in the sense of "a forcible, driving,
urging or impelling desire." The meaning here is "a more gentle,
passionate, yearning that contributes positively to the mate." Thus, it
corresponds with the traditional root, *saqa*.

*Genesis* 4:7. The narrative of Gen 4:7 depicts Cain in the midst of
a struggle with sin. The Lord said regarding his sin, "Sin is lying at
the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." The desire
of sin will overcome him if he does not master it.[^64]

The possibilities for the root of "desire" could be related to either
*saqa* or *saqa*. The traditional meaning of "desire," from the root *saqa*,
would indicate that sin's desire for Cain is "a passionate, longing,
craving appetite for ownership." The emphasis of this root is "a desire
to possess." This harmonizes with its meaning in Canticles, only here
it is "a desire for evil."

On the other hand, if the "desire of sin" is connected to the root
*saqa*, its meaning is "to drive or impel" Cain into subjection by force.
The emphasis of this root is in the idea of "compulsion." Yet the idea
of a forceful, compulsive desire does not seem to be evident in the

[^61]: BDB, 1003; KB, 597.
[^63]: S. Craig Glickman, *A Song For Lovers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1976)
86-87.
[^64]: "Master" is the word "לִפְדָךְ"; literally, "you should rule." In this instance, the
imperfect of "rule" is best understood to express "obligation"; also the modal idea of
"potential, of taking place, or not taking place in the future" is in view. GKC, 330.
narrative. Rather, the traditional meaning of "desire" in the sense of "a yearning or craving for possession" seems to be predominant.65

*Genesis* 3:16. Three worthy views have been offered to explain the meaning of the woman's desire in Gen 3:16. First, following the traditional root for "desire," the word is understood as "a passionate sexual desire that becomes so strong in the woman that she will never rid herself of the pain of childbearing."66

Second, some have understood "desire" to represent "a deep, natural attraction which a woman will have for her husband."67 This yearning is to fulfill certain psychological and protective needs which she does not possess herself. Keil and Delitzsch suggest that this "desire will be so strong that it will border on disease."68 While these two views of the meaning of "desire" cannot be readily denied, it is questionable that the desire ought to be limited to such narrow senses as sexual or psychological needs in view of the preceding context.

A third view argued by Susan Foh tries to draw a linguistic parallel between Gen 3:16 and 4:7, affiliating both instances of the word "desire" with the Arabic root *saqa*.69 Eve's desire was to forcibly drive or urge her husband in the same way sin was trying to forcibly drive Cain.70 The meaning of "rule" is changed from a future indicative to the modal aspect of the prefix conjugation. Instead of "the husband shall rule," it is "he should rule," indicating potential rather than certainty. The whole statement thus reads, "Your desire shall be to control your husband but he must rule over you if he can."

Making these changes, Gen 3:16 is made parallel to Gen 4:7, "Its (sin's) desire shall be to control you but you must rule over it if you can." Thus, these words in v 16 mark the beginning of the antithetical

65The phrase, "sin is lying at your door" has been interpreted, "sin is crouching at your door." The word פֶּרֶה, "to lie down, lie, stretch out," is often used of animals (cf. Gen 29:2; Exod 23:5; Num 22:27; Isa 11:6; 27:10). In Gen 29:14 it is used of a crouching lion. Many have thus understood sin to be "crouching at Cain's door desiring to pounce upon him." This imagery of the lion is not substantiated by the context. However, if this symbolism is used, it upholds the traditional meaning of "desire." A lion's desire is for possession rather than compulsion.


69Foh, "What Is the Woman's Desire?" *WTJ* 37 (1975) 376-83.

70Ibid., 381-82.
battle between the sexes. The woman's "desire" will work against her husband. As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship.

There are major difficulties with this view. The basic defect of this proposal is that it assumes certain conclusions about the passage at the expense of the context. This argument is predicated upon the assertion that exactly what happened in the fall became God's continuing pronouncement upon man. However, examination of the context already has established that Eve did not forcibly urge her husband, which this interpretation requires. On the other hand, neither did Adam try to rule over her. He listened to her and then made his own choice to participate with her in sin (Gen 3:17).

Also arguing against Foh's suggestion is the fact that it reads a possible rendering of Gen 4:7 back into 3:16, just because the phrases are almost identical in the Hebrew. This provides a good grammatical parallel, but not a contextual one.

A final major deficiency in this view is that it fails to provide for a consistent usage of ἡδυμία. Cant 7:11 will not permit the meaning of a forcible desire.

A suggested solution to Genesis 3:16. The exact meaning of Gen 3:16b continues to perplex scholars. It is not possible to come to any kind of a definite conclusion. The best that can be provided is an alternative solution.

A suggested solution to Gen 3:16b is found in assessing the pronouncement made to the woman as a curse, which has its major emphasis in the "rule" of the man. The sense of "rule" in this context is negative, predicting the type of abuse that man will vent.

The LXX rendering of ἡδυμία as ἀποστρόφη can be rendered: (1) a positive sense of "turning, turning back, refuge, bend in a direction toward"; this would be derived from the Arabic root saqa; (2) it may also be a negative sense of "turning away from" as a derivative of the root saqa. The LXX rendering of Gen 3:16 is, "Your desire is toward your husband," (πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα σου ἡ ἀποστροφή σου). In Gen 4:7 (πρὸς σε ἡ ἀποστροφή αὐτοῦ), the LXX translators interpreted this as a reference to Abel's "desire, toward his brother." In both instances, the preposition πρὸς with the accusative expresses "direction toward." Πρὸς may only carry the meaning "against" when it follows a verb of disputing or hostility, which is not the case in these instances; see George B. Winer, A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957) 717. The LXX translators would most likely have used ἔννοι if they meant Gen 3:16 and 4:7 to mean "desire that resists or works against."

The word "rule" (ἐξουσία) was already seen to have reference to man's headship over creation (Ps 8:2-7). Now, for the first time, this word is found in the text of Genesis.
upon his wife. He will carry his headship to domination because of his depraved nature. While this aspect of the curse primarily refers to the husband and wife, it can also refer to men and women outside of the context of marriage where role relationships exist.

Almost every husband, or even most men in general, who have exercised leadership over women have used their position to dominate at one point or another. Paul continually reminds men not to "rule" over their wives in this negative fashion (Eph 5:25-30; Col 3: 19; cf. 1 Pet 3:7-9; see also an inference concerning all men in 1 Cor 11:11-12 as to how they should treat women). If a man is controlled by the Spirit, he may to some extent rise above the downward drag of his depravity and thus nullify the effects of this aspect of the curse. It is even more difficult to make a dogmatic statement concerning the woman's desire. It appears that this statement must be taken in conjunction with the rule of man in order to be part of the curse. Yet this statement must not be viewed, as it has by many, to suggest that "all women willingly or unwillingly shall subject all their desires to their husbands." Nor is there any evidence to support the view that woman is here placed under subjection for the first time. It is also doubtful whether Foh's suggestion is compatible. Women often do battle against their husbands, but this does not serve the intent of Gen 3:16.

The term "desire" is best related to the traditional root, saqa. It refers to "the woman's longing or yearning that she may have about the affairs of life." In the course of the fall, she failed to subordinate this desire under her husband. With this in view, the phrase, "your desire is to your husband," is best regarded as a statement of fact, reminding the first woman that the subordinate principle still remains in effect. However, it is not a pronouncement that all women will submit all their desires to their husbands. Their sin nature precludes that they will do this.

Women, for the most part, have continued to perpetuate the subordinate relationship established prior to the fall to different extents. In almost every case, however, they have experienced a varying degree of harsh rule from men. The statement regarding the woman's desire is not a curse in and of itself, but it becomes one when it is treated in relation to the man's sinful rule.

73Young, Genesis 3, 127-28; Calvin (Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, I. 172) states, "Thy desire shall be unto thy husband,' is of the same force as if he had said that she should not be free and at her own command, but subject to the authority of her husband and dependent upon his will; or as if he had said, 'Thou shalt desire nothing but what thy husband wishes." See also Foh, "What Is The Woman's Desire?" 379.
Women, by virtue of their sin nature, resist the leadership of men by rejecting the harsh rule pronounced in the curse, or, often, any positive rule as well. In either case, the NT confirms that such women are subordinate (1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:34-35; Eph 5:22-23; Col 3:18; 1 Tim 2:11-14; 1 Pet 3:1-7). Depending upon the temperament of the man, as well as the amount of a woman's insubordination, she may receive more or less harsh treatment. The rule of man may not actually seem like a curse to those women who refuse subordination altogether, for they are not in a position to receive it. However, they potentially remain under this curse.

The consistency of this view over other views is found in several factors. It provides a unified explanation of נְשָׁה throughout the OT. It also upholds the hierarchical relationship established prior to the fall. At the same time, it acknowledges the effects of sin that tend to distort and corrupt this role relationship. This view also brings the meaning of Paul's commands concerning the woman's subjection and the man's leadership to full expression.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this article has been to examine the key themes of creation order for their contributions to role relationship. The evangelical feminists who promote egalitarianism emphasize Genesis 1 as the main account describing the positional relationship between the sexes.

First, it was noted that Genesis 1 is a general, chronological account of the events in creation. It introduces the reader to two realms, the spiritual and the functional. The main emphasis is placed upon the spiritual realm in which man and woman correspond in every respect. Both share equally in the image of God. On the other hand, Genesis 2 shifts the emphasis. When the details of the sixth day are unfolded, they reveal a definite positional distinction between man and woman. The feminists refuse to believe this and have provided several explanations to dilute a role distinction. However, many indications argue for the headship of the man. This chapter is also the backbone for the NT's emphasis upon role differentiation in the church, home, and society. Paul uses this pre-Fall principle to support post-Fall subordination.

Moreover, Genesis 3 does not disregard a positional distinction between the male and female. The events of the fall relate, among other considerations, that there was a sinful disregard for the headship established in the previous chapter.

The specific meaning of Gen 3:16b becomes vital to understanding the role relationship. Several views were observed, and a suggested possibility was then presented. Gen 3:16 pronounces a curse
upon the woman, with emphasis upon the abusive rule that man will exercise. The "desire" mentioned provides a reminder to the woman that the subordinate role still continues for her and is the correct position for women in every age. In and of itself, this is not a curse to women. However, it becomes a curse in conjunction with the man's sinful rule. When women do submit themselves under men, it will become hard, at times, because of the man's misuse of rulership. Not all women have placed themselves in a subordinate position to men, but the statement was not meant to express this. In almost every case, women who have subordinated themselves to men have experienced harsh rule in varying degrees. Gen 3: 16 continues to uphold the creation account wherein God established the hierarchical relationship. Together, the first three chapters of Genesis consistently indicate that God's order for man and woman has never changed.

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Eve's Answer to the Serpent:
An Alternative Paradigm for Sin and 
Some Implications in Theology

P. Wayne Townsend

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" (Gen. 3:2-3)

Can we take these italicized words seriously, or must we dismiss them as the hasty additions of Eve's overactive imagination? Did God say or mean this when he instructed Adam in Genesis 2:16-17? I suggest that, not only did Eve speak accurately and insightfully in responding to the serpent but that her words hold a key to reevaluating the doctrine of original sin and especially the puzzles of alien guilt and the imputation of sin. In this article, I seek to reignite discussion on these topics by suggesting an alternative paradigm for discussing the doctrine of original sin and by applying that paradigm in a preliminary manner to various themes in theology, biblical interpretation, and Christian living. I seek not so much to answer questions as to evoke new ones that will jar us into a more productive path of theological explanation. I suggest that Eve's words indicate that the Bible structures the ideas that we recognize as original sin around the concept of uncleanness.

Scholarly Discussion of Eve's Words

Eve has very few complete defenders in the history of scholarship in Genesis.1 Of those, only U. Cassuto explains why he is confident that Eve cor-

rectly stated God's will. After an analysis of the word meaning "to touch" (ng), he concludes, "Hence in the final analysis the clause neither shall you touch it is simply synonymous with the preceding clause." If we accept Cassuto's argument, Eve's words represent little more than a stylistic variation by the writer. Robert Davidson openly adopts this position. Yet, the deviation so catches the eye (as evidenced by Eve's many detractors noted below) that one could justly wonder why the writer would insert such a variation here.

A second class of defenders accepts Eve's words as substantive variations, but deflects criticism of Eve. Nahum M. Sarna suggests the possibility that Eve "is quoting what her husband told her." But the lack of any textual support that the writer of Genesis intended this conclusion gives this the appearance of desperate speculation. John J. Scullion and Phyllis Trible independently conclude that Eve "builds a 'fence around the Torah,' a procedure that her rabbinical successors developed fully to protect divine law and ensure obedience." But this would imply that the writer of these words lived in a context where his readers would be broadly familiar with such "rabbinical fencing," making these words impossibly late additions to Genesis.

Occasionally, commentators omit any comment on the words at all, evidently assuming that they are self-evident, as for example Walter Brueggeman. But the vast majority of commentators consider these words of Eve, at best, unfortunate mental or emotional slips, and, at worst, deliberate distortions. Writers as diverse as James Montgomery Boice, Nehamoh Liebowitz, Henry Morris, Gerhard von Rad, Claus Westerman, and George A. F. Knight populate this camp, indicating a broad tradition of commentary. All these join in cho-

3 Robert Davidson, *Genesis 1-11* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 40: "This addition to the prohibition as originally stated in 2:17 has led certain scholars to suggest that the woman herself is not beginning to overplay God's strictness. It may, however, be no more than a stylistic variation on the prohibition of eating."
5 John J. Scullion, *Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers, and Preachers* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1992), 38: "The woman, in defense, builds a fence around it something God did not say." Phyllis Trible, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Biblical Studies," *Christian Century* 99, no. 4 (1988) : 117: "If the tree is not touched, then its fruit cannot be eaten. Here the woman builds a 'fence around the Torah,' a procedure that her rabbinical successors developed fully to protect divine law and ensure obedience."
rus in proclaiming Eve's culpability. Some even go so far as to delve into Eve's psyche, finding resentment before the Fall. However, this tradition is fraught with difficulties for anyone who wishes to take seriously the logic of the narrative of Genesis 1-3.

The rabbis that Plant quotes are right in considering an "embroidery of the truth to be the opening wedge of sin." Indeed, the Bible consistently condemns any addition to God's Word as sin. Thus, if Eve presumptuously added to God's Word in her conversation with the serpent, she sinned, or began sinning, prior to taking the fruit and eating it.

Yet, the biblical narrative will not allow this. The effects of the Fall (the knowledge of transgression and the shame that drive them to hide first from each other and then from God) occur immediately after their consuming the fruit: "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves" (Gen. 3:7). The Fall is not a process, but a point of disobedience, after which original sin takes hold, and before which we can assume only innocence.

Some commentators have attempted to overcome this difficulty by moving Eve's motivation for the "addition" into her subconscious or emotions. They paint a picture of an Eve who has harbored discontent over God's strictness. However, emotions such as resentment or exasperation directed toward God, 

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8 George A. F. Knight, *Theology in Pictures: A Commentary on Genesis Chapters One to Eleven* (Edinburgh: Handsel Press, 1981), 36: "She shows her exasperation by adding that she and her husband are forbidden even to touch the fruit." Harold G. Stigers, *A Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 74: "[she said it] to temporize, to give expression to resentment against God's command by adding... 'neither shall you touch it.'" Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 78: "Is there, however, a touch of resentment lurking in the refinement that she adds to the original stipulation, namely that they may not even touch the forbidden fruit?" [italics original]


10 Numbers 20:7-12; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:22; Proverbs 30:3-9; 1 Corinthians 4:6; Colossians 2:22-23; Revelation 22:18

11 Robert S. Candlish, *Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 62: "she dwells on the prohibition, amplifying it and magnifying it as an intolerable hardship." Knight, Theology in Pictures, 36: "She shows her exasperation by adding that she and her husband are forbidden even to touch the fruit." H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1942), 148: "By this insertion Eve betrays the course her thought have taken. She feels the prohibition was unduly sharp so unconsciously she sharpens it herself." C. H. MacIntosh, *Genesis to Deuteronomy: Notes on the Pentateuch* (1880; reprint, Neptune, NJ.: Liozeaux Brothers, 1974), 28: "whether her misquotation proceeded from ignorance, or indifference, or a desire to represent God in an
or a hidden desire for the fruit that exists prior to the temptation,\textsuperscript{12} imply a corruption or defect in Eve's character prior to the Fall; she harbored moral rebellion in her heart while still "unfallen" and was therefore created evil. Nor does it assist us to grant her clemency due to "alarm and foreboding" over the conniving of the serpent.\textsuperscript{13} Presumption driven by fear remains presumption.

The high commitment across theological lines to such a position suggests a deeper foundation. Gowan notes that there is a history of sexism in the interpretation of Genesis 3, in which commentators attempt to understand why Eve was the target of the Serpent's temptation. To do so, they call her either the weaker or stronger partner because of her gender.\textsuperscript{14} Perhaps a better explanation may simply be theological inertia. The denigration of Eve's person, motivation, and words in Genesis 3:2-3 has a long and venerable history, going back to the Reformation and before. But, to do justice to both the text and the logic of the text, we must accept Eve's words, "do not touch it" as significant, logical, and innocent. To accomplish this we can do no better than to pose, regarding Eve's words, the questions that Scullion poses regarding the Serpent:\textsuperscript{15}

What is the function of the Story?
What did it symbolize in the ancient Near East?
What associations would it evoke in the minds of the people of Israel as they listened to the story?

What Was the Function of the Story

Most commentators on Genesis seem to read Eve's words as if no other revelation existed. If they refer to any other text at all, it is only Genesis 2:17 in which the original command from God is first rendered. But such a reading overlooks the way Genesis assumes the exodus from Egypt and conquest of Canaan and how it uses the Sinai code.

arbitrary light, or from all three, it is plain that she was entirely of the true ground of simple confidence in, and subjugation to, God's holy Word." Stigers, \textit{A Commentary on Genesis}, 74: "To temporize, to give expression to resentment against God's command by adding ... 'neither shall you touch it.'" Vawter, \textit{On Genesis}, 78: "Is there, however a touch of resentment lurking in the refinement that she adds to the original stipulation, namely that they may not even touch the forbidden fruit?" [italics original]

\textsuperscript{12} John W. Willis, \textit{Genesis} (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing, 1979), 118: "The woman's hidden desire for the forbidden fruit is revealed in her overreaction to the serpent's question: 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die

\textsuperscript{13} Franz Delitzsch, \textit{A New Commentary on Genesis}, trans. Sophia Taylor (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), 153: "It is more probable that the woman seized with alarm and foreboding of what the serpent was trying to persuade her to, sought by this addition to cut off any further allurements."

\textsuperscript{14} Donald E. Gowan, \textit{Genesis 1-11: From Eden to Babel} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 53.

\textsuperscript{15} Scullion, \textit{Genesis}, 38.
Genesis was written to a redeemed people of God. Genesis, as received, contains an apologetic for the origins of Israel as a distinct nation and its claim on the land of Canaan. Chapters 1-11 place Israel in the context of a fallen and diverse humanity, culminating in the table of nations and the tower of Babel. In the table of nations, Genesis lays special emphasis on Egypt (Mizraim) and Canaan, the two principals in the exodus-conquest by detailing their genealogies most extensively (Gen. 10:13-19). The remainder of Genesis focuses on the selection of Abraham and his descendants as God's special people (Gen. 12:2-3; 13:16; 17:2, 4; 18:18; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3, 14; 32:12; 35:11; 41:49; 46:3; 47:27; 48:4, 16, 19) and the land as God's promised possession (Gen. 12:7; 13:15, 17; 15:18; 17:8; 23:18; 24:7; 28:13; 35:12; 48:4; 50:24). In the process, Genesis 15:12-21 provides a theodicy of sorts covering the entire experience of slavery-exodus-conquest. Genesis 9:25 effectively authorizes the subjugation of the Canaanites.

Thus, Genesis assumes the history of exodus-conquest, in the midst of which Israel received the law-code of Sinai.16 Traces of this law-code play important parts in the drama of Genesis. The story of Judah and Tamar assumes the levirate marriage of Deuteronomy 25:5-6. And the flood depends in part on a common understanding of clean and unclean animals and their respective appropriateness for sacrifice. While such concepts did predate the exodus,17 the post-exodus context of the first readers implies that these passages were intended to be read in the light of the law given at Sinai, including the cleanliness code found in Leviticus.

In this context, the story of the Fall functions as a pretext for the exodus-conquest. Genesis 3 identifies the sources of evil that have led to the suffering of slavery. It also justifies the conquest by expanding the division between the woman and the Serpent to an ongoing struggle between their descendants (Gen. 3:15).18 All of this relies on a separation from, and over against, the rest of the nations—the very separation identified in the Levitical code (Lev. 18:24-30; 20:22-27).

16 I happily count myself among those whom Walter Houston derides as "biblicistic scholars swallowing whole the Bible's own account of their [Israel's] origin." Walter Houston, Purity and Monotheism (Sheffield, U.K.: JSOT Press, 1993), 120. I freely admit that I assume the validity of the scriptural history that depicts God's giving the laws found in Exodus through Deuteronomy prior to the entrance into the land. Such are the assumptions of faith, for which I make no apology, except to note that the assumptions of criticism which allow others to give these laws a postexilic (or at least Davidic) origin are equally grounded in presuppositional faith commitments.


18 Note that here the woman and her seed are identified with the side of holiness and godliness over against the evil of the Serpent. This should surely add more stature to Eve in her conversation with the Serpent.
Some will find this position naturally untenable. The hermeneutical descendants of Wellhusen may object that any uncleanness reference must arise from a late priestly source and therefore must be derivative of, not foundational to, Old Testament thought. Traditionally, critical scholars designate Genesis 2-3 as derived from the "J" or "Yahwist" document or source or tradition (commonly dated to the Davidic or Solomonic era), whereas they place the whole of Leviticus in the venue of the "P" or "Priestly" tradition (commonly proclaimed to be postexilic). Furthermore, they give J a purpose distinct from P (critiquing royal authority versus salvaging the traditions and identity of a despairing, postexilic community). Whether this prevented some commentators from questioning the significance of Eve's words cannot be known because they remain universally silent on the issue of any supposed source for the phrase, "do not touch," separate from the rest of the text in which it sits.

Thomas Kuhn has noted that theoretical paradigms, such as the documentary hypothesis, serve not only to organize thought, but to set the boundaries for what a theorist can possibly perceive to exist.

Surveying the rich experimental literature from which these examples are drawn makes one suspect that something like a paradigm is prerequisite to perception itself. What a man sees depends both upon what he looks at and also upon [what] his previous visual-conceptual experience has taught him to see. In the absence of such training there can only be, in William James' phrase, "a bloomin' buzzin' confusion." Indeed, according to Kuhn's analysis, even major theoretical crises do not force theoreticians to spot evidence that runs counter to their paradigm. This must surely condition the perception of those holding to the documentary hypothesis, for Genesis 3:2 lies at the heart of the theory. The doc-

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22 Ibid., 77: "Though they may begin to lose faith and then to consider alternatives, they do not renounce the paradigm that has led them into crisis. They do not, that is, treat anomalies as counter-instances, though in the vocabulary of philosophy of science that is what they are." Interestingly, such a crisis may be in the offing, heralded by the likes of Scullion, *Genesis*, 6-7, who notes Rendtorff's attempt to dispense with the documentary hypothesis as "tried in the fire, found wanting, and leading to an impasse." Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 37: "In a book that is patently anonymous, and where all original texts have long since disappeared, it is most likely that a project to determine Genesis' authorship and mode of composition is doomed from the start." and Jay W. Marshall, *Israel and the Book of the Covenant: An Anthropological Approach to Biblical Law* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 25: regarding the hook of the covenant the notes that source criticism has ceased, form critics "have posited just about every imaginable origin and *Sitz im Leben*, but actually have offered little information about the cultural context," and neither history nor redaction studies "can offer much progress without accompanying knowledge of the relationship between law codes and legal procedures."
mentary hypothesis originated in part in a distinction between the use of the
names Elohim and Yahweh in the text of the Pentateuch, such as found in
Genesis 1 and Genesis 2-3 and ascribing these to different eras and intentions.
 Universally, this hypothesis has assigned Genesis 1 completely to P and 2-3 com-
pletely to J. \(^{23}\) Having made that theoretical commitment, one could easily over-
look any connection between any phrase in the Yahwist chapters 2-3 and the
Priestly book of Leviticus.

But even within the camp of criticism, room can be made to accept the valid-
ity of a Priestly insertion in this story. In reciting the basics of the Documentary
Hypothesis, von Rad notes that even P "contains an abundance of ancient and
very ancient material"\(^{24}\) and allows for "minor insertions from the Priestly
Document" throughout Genesis,\(^{25}\) though he does not identify this as one.
(This resonates with R. K. Harrison's criticism of dating P late: "Modern dis-
coveries have always shown that priestly material from the Near East is always
early rather than late in arising, and that priestly traditions are usually pre-
served in a meticulous manner."\(^{26}\) Moreover, Van Seter has recently suggested
that the Yahwist (J) is possibly later than earlier thought, perhaps in the early
postexilic period.\(^{27}\) Wenham further squeezes J and P together, noting that it is
difficult to maintain a postexilic date for Leviticus "in the face of abundant quo-
tations in Ezekiel and linguistic evidence that P's vocabulary does not resemble
that of late biblical Hebrew."\(^{28}\) Additionally, Anthony F. Campbell and Mark A.
O'Brien declare that the Documentary Hypothesis applies only to narrative
texts, and on that basis designate the uncleanness code of Leviticus as undated
"non-source text."\(^{29}\) Finally, though he holds to a late dating of Leviticus, Walter
Houston notes, "that the biblical system of rules arose in a setting that was emi-
nently compatible with it: it required no sharp changes in habitual dietary and
cultic practices general in the land and its environs since the beginning of the
Middle Bronze Age."\(^{30}\) Such being the case, one can hardly exclude the possi-
ibility, even from within the structure of the Documentary Hypothesis, that
Eve's statements might be original to the story and indicative of the story's
dependence on the cleanliness code found in Leviticus 11.

\(^{23}\) Westerman, Genesis 1-11: A Commentary, 186: "The generally acknowledged conclusions
that Gen.2-3 is to be attributed to a different literary source (J) from Gen. 1 (P) is assumed."
\(^{24}\) von Rad, Genesis, 25.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 28.
\(^{26}\) R. K. Harrison, Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove: InterVarsity
\(^{27}\) John Van Seter, Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis (Louisville: John
Knox, 1992), 21, 129.
\(^{29}\) Anthony F. Campbell and Mark O'Brien, Sources of the Pentateuch: Texts, Introductions,
\(^{30}\) Houston, Purity and Monotheism, 177.
Given such a dependence, the phrase, "do not touch," functions to draw the readers' attention beyond the bounds of Genesis itself and into the cleanness code. As I will show shortly, it raises in the mind of the original reader many associations that enrich the meaning of the text and communicate more than our present tradition of commentary suggests.

What Did the Words of Eve Symbolize?

With this understanding, we may revisit the words of Eve to the Serpent. She specifies that "God did say ... you may not touch it [the fruit] " (Gen. 3:3). If we restrict the context of these words to Genesis, then we must admit that God did not say that (Gen. 2:17). But, if we allow that the writer of Genesis expected a basic familiarity with the law of Sinai, we must allow a broader context for this statement, including the Sinai laws found in the whole Pentateuch. In this broader context the words, "you may not touch," take on deeper significance.

We find parallels to Eve's words in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Leviticus 11 defines food that is lawful for Israelites to eat. Concerning unclean land animals, verse 8 states, "You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you" (emphasis added). The vocabulary and sentence structure of this verse strongly parallel's Eve's words in Genesis 3:3: "You must not eat fruit ... and you must not touch it."

This parallel strengthens when we realize that this is a special prohibition against touching unclean (forbidden) food and is beyond the prohibition against touching dead clean animals given in Leviticus 11:39-40. Furthermore, this combined prohibition against eating and touching repeats throughout the chapter (with certain stylistic variations) in reference to various forbidden foods. Indeed, the prohibition against touching becomes a crescendo of emphasis as the chapter proceeds: unclean water creatures--"And since you are to detest them, you must not eat their meat and you must detest their carcasses" (v.11) ; flying creatures--"These are the birds you are to detest and not eat because they are detestable [to you] ... whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening." (v 13, 24b); land animals (again!)--"whoever touches the carcasses of any of them will be unclean ... whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean until evening. Anyone who picks up their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean until evening" (26b, 27b-28a).

Deuteronomy 14:8b repeats this pattern once, phrasing the prohibition identically to Leviticus 11:8a, the closest Leviticus parallel to Genesis 3:3. While it could be argued that Deuteronomy 14 was derived from Leviticus 11, such a derivation does not lessen the strength of the parallel to Genesis 3:3. The very choice of this phrase over others in Leviticus 11, whether by derivation or common source, points to it as a key phrase in teaching the prohibitions against unclean food.

Read in this light, the original readers of Genesis 3 would have understood Eve's words as a natural outgrowth of God's command in Genesis 2:17. The
Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was forbidden food, and therefore unclean.

Obviously there are differences. Israel knew of no unclean plants or fruit. But then, Adam and Eve did not eat meat; fruit was the extent of the food granted (Gen. 2:16). Furthermore, the consequences of even touching the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was death (Gen. 3:3), while touching unclean food only made one unclean until evening (Lev. 11:24-28). Yet the consequences of even temporary uncleanness were severe. It required a sin offering for atonement (Lev. 5:2, 5-6), and cut one off from worship, requiring death for the unclean worshiper (Lev. 7:21 cf. Ex. 31:14 for the meaning of the phrase "cut off"). Following Meredith G. Kline, the Garden of Eden was a holy temple-garden, a thought reinforced by the garden motif found in the temple (1 Kings 6:23-35). Such an understanding would equate any unclean person in the Garden of Eden with an unclean person in the temple or even the Holy of Holies—a situation demanding death. But even if we ignore such a connection between the garden and temple, if an Israelite ate unclean food and did not cleanse himself, the ominous threat proclaimed "he will be held responsible" (Lev. 17:16). And eating unclean food was a sin that subjected the whole nation to exile (Lev. 20:22-26), an obvious parallel to the punishment of Adam and Eve.

Finally, we must reckon with the repeated emphasis on evening. Temporary uncleanness by touching demanded immediate cleansing and left one unclean until evening (Lev. 11:25, 28, 31, 32, 39, 40; 17:15). Could this be why Genesis 3:8 notes that God came walking in the "cool of the day," that is, after sunset? Does the narrative indicate that God is visiting them after the time when their uncleanness should have been cleansed, a time when the offense of uncleanness should normally have passed?

In light of all of this one can argue that the original readers of Eve's words would have understood the story in the context of God's commands concerning unclean foods, and would have understood that the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was unclean food. This has consequences for both our reading of Genesis 3 and our understanding of original sin.

What Did Uncleanliness Symbolize?

If we accept the connection between the words of Eve and the cleanness code of the Sinai laws, then we can move on to Scullion's second question:

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32 Note the careful preparation given the high priest for entering the temple in Leviticus 16, including the atonement for sin, the bathing to cleanse, and the covering with holy garments to cover any remaining uncleanness. Leviticus 16:2 makes death the outcome of any less careful handling of the high priest's presence before God.
"What did it symbolize in the ancient Near East?" Here we run onto rough roads. The exact nature of uncleanness continues to elude scholars. And, as an added impediment to the evangelical scholar, the present theories assume a secular, sociological stance. They assume that the dietary laws of Leviticus arose solely from the culture surrounding the Israelites, the product of priests or social consensus. This contrasts starkly with the evangelical church's confession that the Scriptures have divine origin and the implication that any interpretation take seriously the testimony of Scripture concerning the historical circumstances that God describes in this revelation. Yet, these studies have shed light on the cultural context in which God gave these commands.

Following Walter Houston, we may divide most theories into etic and emic classes, or theories supposing that the meaning of cultural features arise to explain historically prior practices, as compared with those supposing that cultural features gain their meaning only in the context of currently held values and beliefs. Without replicating his extensive review of the theories, a few comments can be made. First we should take seriously Houston's suggestion that we need not "take sides," that "historical, material, and symbolic considerations must all be taken into account" in seeking to understand the meaning of a cultural symbol. As I stated earlier, and is evident from Houston's own expansive survey, cleanness codes were widespread throughout the times and cultures of biblical history. Thus, God merely appropriated that historical phenomenon and utilized it to express his will in the Levitical code. The practice does, indeed, precede the explanation. The practice may even have some origins useful for understanding the distinction among clean, unclean, and holy animals.

However, the emic school must command preeminence. One can doubt that any religious practice, however old, can persist in the face of temptation if not reinforced by concurrent values and beliefs. And indeed, there must have been temptation to raise and eat pigs and other unclean animals in Israel, otherwise the prohibition is meaningless. Indeed, Houston well assesses the point when he states, "Whatever the source of social tension, attitudes of contempt [toward food] only develop into formal taboos when a religious factor intervenes."

The Christian Reformed Synod of 1972 adopted the following pastoral advice which expresses this implication well: "Synod encourages the churches to see to it that biblical studies are carried on in a careful and disciplined way, submissively rethinking the thoughts of Scripture itself, and accordingly warns against the use of any method of interpretation which excludes or calls into question either the event-character or the revelational meaning of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God. Acts of Synod 1972 (Grand Rapids: CRC Board of Publications, 1972), 69.

Houston, Purity and Monotheism, 120-21.

Ibid., 79.

Ibid., 176, 212.

Ibid., 212.
What is that religious factor? "The division into clean (edible) foods and unclean (inedible) foods corresponds to the division between holy Israel and the Gentile world."  

Peter's vision in Acts 10 and his subsequent visit to Cornelius confirms this concept as apostolic, since overcoming the Levitical aversion to unclean foods becomes the symbol for overcoming the aversion to evangelizing the unclean (Gentile) people. But current theorists display subtle differences on how certain animals become associated with the unclean Gentiles. Douglas (and Wenham following Douglas) suggests that cleanness and holiness designate conformity to standards of "wholeness and normality," which the unclean fail to meet. 

Douglas attributes the origin of this to an original division between pastoral and agricultural society, where pigs (of little use to pastoralists) would become abhorred as foreign animals and were therefore symbolic of foreign peoples.

Onto this original abhorrence, Douglas applies a deductive approach to the matter of cleanness. She begins with the general assumption (deduced from many cultural sources) that "uncleanness is a matter of place.... Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained." This she then superimposes on the biblical text to determine the pattern that uncleanness breaks. Viewed through this lens, she concludes that "all holiness is exemplified by completeness. Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes not be confused." She settles on methods of locomotion as the criteria for the pattern, the frame into which various creatures must fit to be declared unclean: hopping, jumping, or walking for land animals; use of fins and scales for sea creatures. However, she admits that she cannot explain by this method why some birds are unclean.

Scholars have heavily criticized Douglas' thesis, and excellent summaries of these criticisms may be found in the work of Firmage and Houston. Without repeating their extensive analysis, we can note two basic defects in Douglas' theory. First, the criteria for uncleanness given in Leviticus does not limit itself to methods of locomotion. Chewing the cud (for land animals) and scales (for

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41 Ibid., 40.

42 Ibid., 53.

43 Ibid., 55.

44 Ibid.

water creatures) have nothing to do with how a creature moves. (Note catfish who, without scales, move in a way indistinguishable from other fish.) This becomes especially apparent when discussing animals that swarm on the ground. "It is not convincing to suggest that there is anything in common between the modes of movement of a worm, a crab, a minnow, a butterfly, and a mouse. The conclusion must be that while in reference to creatures confined to the ground _seres _takes the place of _remes _and so has some connotation of movement, it does not in general define a group by their "mode of propulsion."46

Second, Douglas assumes that societies build taxonomic systems and then apply them to their reality, thereby designating what is normal or clean or acceptable. But people build their taxonomic systems in reality, classifying everything that appears there in some place. It would be only when some alien animal would invade an area with an already established classification system that something might appear so different as to be declared abnormal or unclean. And even then, people are likely to push something into a known category or even make a new category.47 Take, for instance, children's seeing a bat for the first time. They are likely to call it a bird until some closer examination challenges their decision; or perhaps even consider it a hairy bird until corrected. These two problems render Douglas' thesis on locomotion untenable. But that does not as such disqualify her theory that uncleanness itself is that which is out of place. It merely moves the grounds for that condemnation to a nontaxonomic system.

Edwin Firmage applies this separation from Gentiles via the temple cult. Israel was called to be holy as God is holy;48 not simply clean, not simply free from impurity, but holy. They were to approximate the character of God. Therefore, their diet had to be restricted to only such animals as were suitable for sacrifice.49 As with most theorists, he runs onto rough roads once he leaves the land animals behind and begins to explore swimmers and flyers. He finds an extension from the land to the sea by noting that forbidden sea creatures (such as eels and crabs) may resemble forbidden land animals (such as serpents and crawling insects).50 Turning to flyers, he admits to the utter speculative nature of his reflections and lands on the theory that those forbidden birds fail to live up to the image of the dove, the paradigm temple bird.51 But he must

46 Houston, _Purity and Monotheism_, 105.
47 Ibid., 103.
49 Ibid., 186.
50 Ibid., 189,200-201.
51 Ibid., 190-91.
wiggle under the strain that locusts have never been sacrificial animals and therefore must represent some kind of concession to the poor.\footnote{Ibid., 192.}

Houston would take us another direction. He suggests that unclean animals, such as pigs, might have been associated with worship of the dead and of underworld deities.\footnote{Houston, Purity and Monotheism, 168.} In such worship the unclean animals may actually have been eaten. This would associate unclean animals with foreign deities and with death and evil. Eating such food would be an obvious offense to God.

Underlying this emic construction, Houston sees an etic division between wild and domestic animals. "Wild creatures refuse the dominion of humankind, they tend to be violent and dangerous, and their diet typically tends to include waste matter and blood."\footnote{Ibid., 199.} Houston must quickly make exceptions for "those large herbivores that had always formed part of people's diet in this area ... certain wild beasts, because of their diet, behavior and mode of life, could be seen as domestic animals in an honorary senses, as it were."\footnote{Ibid., 200.} In the end, the diet is decisive for Houston, who connects the division between clean and unclean to an ideal, nonviolent prefall vegetarianism that "stands for the order and peace of civil society over against the disorder and violence of the wild."\footnote{Ibid., 258.}

One might wonder what were the vegetarian fish to which the Levitical code referred and why cattle and those wild herbivores were not excluded because they will eat carrion and fecal matter. Indeed, if eating meat made an animal unclean, why did that criteria not apply to man, and, therefore, why was the vegetarian ideal not commanded explicitly? Yet, this seems to be an extension to the logic of his theory, an embellishment rather than a foundation.

If we delve to the core of each of these theories, we see some possible outlines to consider. Douglas would have us see the ground of uncleanness in disorder. Firmage would concentrate on the separateness of holiness located in the sacrificial "food of God." And Houston would have us understand a need for separation from foreign deities and demons. Of these, Houston's insights seem to promise the most fruitful interpretation of the forbidden fruit. But I will consider all of them when examining Genesis 3.

Implications of the Fruit as Unclean Food for Genesis 3

Houston's concept of unclean food as connected with forbidden foreign deities would paint the words of Eve in Genesis 3 in black and white. We can
abandon the problematic idea that Eve added to God's command. Rather, with Bonhoeffer, we can proclaim, "Eve's answer still remains on the plane of ignorance [of evil]. She does not know or recognize evil and she can therefore do nothing but repeat the given commandment and put it correctly. This is a great deal, she remains true to the commandment."57

In this framework, Eve's words signal a deeper, more troubling understanding of the situation. The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is unclean in a Levitical sense. All the implications derived from those commands can be applied to this passage.

First of all, the tree must be quite dangerous. It represents an embassy of impurity, a locale under the dominion of forces alienated from God. Following Houston, the tree takes on the darkest tones of an outpost of evil in the midst of God's dwelling. No one should be surprised to find the Serpent lurking there—the foreign deity-wanna-be, calling the faithful to transgress, to fall into the domain of death. The first readers, seeing the association of unclean food with underworld deities would find in the tree the gate to the grave. Thus the words of God, "when you eat of it you shall surely die," rang frighteningly true in their ears.

Second, eating or even touching the fruit made Adam and Eve unclean (Lev. 11:24-28). They had become disordered in creation (creatures striving to be "like God"). They had debased themselves with the food of foreigners. They had ingested the offerings of demons. Although the Scriptures only declare a temporary uncleanness for touching and eating such food ("till evening," Lev. 11:24-28), eating unclean food in conscious rebellion against God's command was grounds for being "cut off" from God (Lev. 20:22-26). Therefore, the death penalty would certainly be expected.58 And, inevitably, God expelled Adam and Eve from the garden, just as the Levitical law demanded (Lev. 20:22-26).

From Douglas' perspective, even temporary uncleanness would render them out of place in the garden, an offense forcing their removal. Firmage would find a human couple standing in the garden-temple of God, with alien food on their lips, unholy. From Houston's vantage, Adam and Eve had committed idolatry, worshiping the serpent and submitting to his rule. They had forfeited their rights as his servants and had to be removed from the promised land.

But, additionally, it becomes clear that Adam and Eve's uncleanness was not temporary. For they were transformed: "The eyes of both of them were opened,

57 Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1-3*, 69.
58 The garden certainly represented living in the presence of God. God commanded that the garden be symbolically worked into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (Cherubim guarding the entrance—Ex. 26:31 cf Gen. 3:24), which Solomon expanded or repeated in the construction of the temple (1 Kings 6:29-35). Indeed, focus on the garden in Genesis 2-3 may have evoked a sense of humans living in the Most Holy Place.
and they realized they were naked" (Gen. 3:7 cf. 2:25). In her theory, Douglas displays to us Adam and Eve as deformed creatures with no proper place in God's world, warped away from God's creational standards. Firmage sees them as alienated from God--common less-than-holy people. Houston darkens this alienation, declaring them genetically aligned with foreign deities of darkness and death, permanent residents of the unclean world.

Uncleanness as a Paradigm for Original Sin

The "natural" uncleanness of Adam and Eve would naturally transmit to all their offspring. Unclean animals give birth, according to their kind, to unclean animals. Likewise, unclean humanity gives birth to unclean humanity.

It may amaze some to apply this logic to people, but Paul applies it in 1 Corinthians 7:14. There, in arguing against a believer's divorcing his or her unbelieving spouse, Paul notes that the unbelieving spouse has been sanctified (made not only clean, but holy, for God's purposes). And he gives as proof that the expected outcome of such a union would be unclean children but contends that the children of such a union are holy.

Thus, to answer Scullion's third question, in Eve's words, we mark the warning that eating the fruit will change the holy stewards of God's creation (and therefore all their descendants) into unclean creatures because of eating unclean food. Our parents ate, and we are unclean. Their uncleanness (viewed as deformity or alienation or both) becomes ours by birth. Uncleanness describes that which we call original sin.

At this point, I urge caution. I do not suggest that the Bible declares that the cultic uncleanness found in Leviticus 11 and echoed in Genesis 3:2 equals original sin. Rather, in communicating the Fall to his people, God utilized the concept of uncleanness (common to the cultures of the time), molded by his specific use of the concept in the Sinai code, and applied it to Adam and Eve as a way of communicating what original sin is like. God expounds the history of the Fall through the metaphor of uncleanness.

Note also that I do not suggest that the Fall became the primary picture through which God discussed that which we call original sin nor sin in general. The Fall narrative fades quickly from Scripture's discussion of sin, even inside Genesis, and does not arise again until Romans 5 and then only indirectly as a foil to Christ's role in salvation. Rather, I suggest that the fall narrative is built on the Levitical doctrine of uncleanness, a doctrine that is the primary paradigm for Scripture's discussion of original sin. This doctrine permeates the Old Testament, as one can show by any cursory review in an exhaustive concordance of the words unclean, clean, and holy. As I have begun to show and will show later, it plays significant roles in the New Testament as well.

Indeed, one step forward in the doctrine of original sin may be to simply view it as the doctrine of congenital spiritual uncleanness. N. Kiuchi has noted that in the view of Leviticus "sin [the Hebrew word ht'] is a kind of uncleanness,
produced on a dimension different from that of natural uncleanness, namely by breaking a divine prohibition.⁵⁹ Here, we can distinguish the biblical distinction between original sin, on the one hand, and rebellion/sin [ḥīr'] described in the oft cited exemplars of sin in the Old Testament, including the golden calf incident of Exodus 32, Baal of Peor of Numbers 25, and the grumbling at Meribah of Numbers 20. These were used as symbols of active rebellion,⁶⁰ a category separate from natural uncleanness and related only indirectly to the innate sin-fullness understood by what we call original sin. Here the prominence of uncleanness stands unchallenged. Therefore, what the Bible declares about the nature and spread of cultic uncleanness in the Sinai code grants us insight into the nature and spread of original sin.

Cultic Uncleanness and the Imputation of Sin.

If this interpretation holds, the puzzle concerning the imputation of sin deserves a reinvestigation, for uncleanness points to a different biblical paradigm for addressing the issue. Uncleanness defines original sin as a culpable state of being. The unclean person was unclean not so much because of what they had done but because of what they were. And that uncleanness accrued to Israelites in situations beyond their control. If someone died suddenly in the presence of a Nazarite, the Nazarite became unclean and "sinned against the Lord by being in the presence of the dead body" (Num. 6:9-12). If, during the night, someone died in the tent in which another Israelite slept, the Israelite became unclean (Num. 19:14). Atonement required not only a sin offering (Lev. 4:1) but also the water of cleansing (Num. 19:11-12, 14). Failure to seek cleansing meant being "cut off" from God's people (Num. 19:13b).

Further, Israelite women became unclean every month during their period of menstruation (Lev. 15:19-23). Again, this required a sin offering (Lev. 19:28-30). And the penalty for ignoring this state of uncleanness meant sexually being cut off (Lev. 20:18). In addition, a descendant of a priest who had a physical defect was, in a sense, unclean (or at least incapable of holiness). Even though they could eat the holy food (Lev. 12:22),⁶¹ they could defile [yihallel from ḫill] the tabernacle or altar merely by their ministry at them (Lev. 21:23). Such defilement implies uncleanness, since this is what unclean food does to one who eats or touches it (Lev. 11:42-43).

When we view these examples of God's holding people culpable for a state of being over which they had no positive control, the question of alien guilt becomes more concrete. Rather than wrestling with it simply via the interfer-

⁶⁰ See Joshua 22:17; Psalm 81:7; 95:8; 106:19, 26, 32.
⁶¹ I take this to be a concession by God to the deformed descendants of priests, since the) had no other means of subsistence.
ence of Romans 5:12-17, we are controlling it with a fully developed system of
guilt by uncleanness that is tied into the Fall directly.

Furthermore, this system does not fit the theories of federalism, realism, or
even mediate imputation. In opposition to Federalism, uncleanness declares
that we are guilty at the point of conception due to our state of being, not
through delegation of authority to Adam. Unlike Realism, uncleanness traces
our guilt to our present culpable state of being, not to historical actual actions
by us in Adam. And uncleanness eliminates the need to mediate guilt for
Adam's sin through the accompanying depravity, since our guilt resides in us
apart from Adam's actions because, by effect of Adam's actions, we are unclean
of ourselves. But uncleanness still resounds with the reformation understand-
ing of sin as "a corruption of all nature--an inherent depravity" (Belgic
Confession, art. 15).

Alien Guilt

Having said all of this, I recognize that we still face the problem of alien guilt.
Indeed, the reader's anxiety over alien guilt may have heightened as a result of
these musings. In a context of Western jurisprudence, where one is considered
innocent until it is proved that he did something wrong, the concept of being
born in a state of culpability grates against our sense of justice.

First of all, we should note that the guilt is no longer truly alien. Using
uncleanness as a paradigm for original sin, we note that the guilt is our guilt for
our corruption. The source of the corruption is alien to God's original intent
and act of creation, but even the corruption is "natural" and "normal" for us as
descendants of Adam and Eve. Our discomfort has shifted from the source of
the guilt to the reason for the guilt.

Second, we can note our own natural loathing of that which is grossly
deformed or polluted. In our continued reflection of the image of God (how-
ever warped) we instinctively pull back from that which radically departs from
normativity. In response to physical norms, we reflect God's judgment when
(before compassion can take its course) we recoil at gross deformities in babies,
the severely mutilated bodies of accident victims, or the festering wounds of
lepers. In nature, the ratty remains of a cat-killed robin, the stench of a massive
fish die-off from industrial waste, and the bloated body of a road-killed raccoon
all repel us. We abhor the obvious moral degradation of physical torture, per-
verse sexual practices, and massive political corruption. There are also limits to
our ability to accept ugliness in the place of beauty. (Even the most loving par-
ent can be challenged by a fifth-grade band concert.) In all of these, and many
more, we show that tolerance of the abnormal has its limits.

Finally, we can console ourselves by noting that even this is, at best, a proxi-
mate analogy to reality. Nothing can truly describe the offense of a finite creature
against the infinite, holy God of the universe. The proportions will simply not
allow a balance that we can easily grasp. God talks down to us with uncleanness, and in the process must simplify things that lie beyond our comprehension. In such a context, we must not so much ask how this can be, as ask what we can do in response. The unclean person in Israel often could not help his uncleanness. But he could seek the cure in sacrifice and unction. Although guilt comes on us unbidden from our birth, a just God has provided release: the infusing righteousness of Christ and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

The Imputation of Righteousness

As John Murray points out in his discussion of the Roman Catholic view of imputation of sin, the definition of imputation of sin affects the interpretation of imputation of Christ's righteousness in Romans 5.62 Here again, the Levitical doctrine of uncleanness illuminates the topic with a new light.

Often Christ came in contact with unclean people: lepers, the woman with the flow of blood, the dead daughter and son.63 In each of these instances, contact with them should have made Christ unclean.64 This would have implied separation from God and defilement of Christ's person. Instead, contact with Christ makes the unclean person clean (i.e., the cause of uncleanness is removed). Thus, the holiness of Christ reverses the common spiritual order where unclean things can contaminate, but holy things remain powerless to purify (cf. Hag. 2:12-13).

This, of course, reflects the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice: becoming sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Con 5:21). Indeed, our righteousness comes from being dead, resurrected, and ascended "in Christ" (Rom. 6:1-4; Eph. 2:4-9; Phil. 3:8-10). However one defines this,65 this doctrine points to the assumption of Christ's identity in contact and communion with him. Does this make us contagious carriers of Christ's righteousness? Perhaps the apostle Paul attaches such significance in his argument against a Christian's divorcing his or her unbelieving spouse in 1 Corinthians 7:14, as mentioned earlier.

Romans 5:12-17

Applying these reflections to the classic passage on immediate imputation suggests the following interpretation. Adam's sin and "all sinned" in verse 12 may reflect the understanding of Adam's sin as the cause of the culpable state of being that we call the sin nature or original sin. This sin nature bore the con-

64 Leviticus 22:4-6; Haggai 2:12-13; and by implication Leviticus 13:45.
65 For an overview of various concepts of being "in Christ" see Lewis Smedes, Union with Christ (1970; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).
sequences of death up to the time of Moses despite the absence of law (v. 14) because it was and/or is a transgression of being, not doing. As such, it constitutes sufficient grounds for condemnation without further transgression of the law. This reflects the Reformation understanding of original sin as "a corruption of all nature ... so vile and enormous in God's sight that it is enough to condemn the human race" (Belgic Confession, art.15). Due to Adam's transgression, this sin nature extends to all who descend from him, as does the consequent judgment, death, and condemnation (vv.15-18). Again, this accords with the Reformation understanding of original sin as an "inherited depravity" (Belgic Confession, art.15) spread "byway of the propagation of [man's] perverted nature" (Canons of Dordt, third and fourth main points, art.2).

In parallel, "by the grace of the one man" the "gift of righteousness ... through the one man" overflows to all who are in him. Christ's contagious righteousness mediated through union with him eliminates the uncleanness and brings redemption.

Other Possible Areas of Application

Moving beyond a purely theological understanding, uncleanness as a paradigm allows us to enter into cultural discussions of depravity and culpability. In response to the question, "Is alcoholism or any other addiction either sin or sickness?" the uncleanness theory responds, "Yes!" Sin resides not simply in the moral nature but in the whole being of a person. It should hardly surprise us that such depravity of being might manifest itself in physical defects leading to a vulnerability to addiction. Yet, the addict remains culpable for that deformed nature because that deformity, in itself, is an offense before God against which he must seek remedy, for which only Christ can atone, and from which only the Holy Spirit can liberate. Any form of physical deformity that affects moral decision making cannot not detract from our culpability before God.

Again, the uncleanness theory alters our understanding of being salt and light. If the righteousness of Christ is contagious in the relationship of marriage, it implies that other relationships may sanctify the partner for God's purposes. This calls us to reflect on how the presence of a Christian, living in Christ's holiness, sanctifies the unbelievers with whom they work so that the results of their collaborations become holy to God. Does the call by Paul not to be unevenly yoked identify distinct limits to the sanctifying effect of a Christian in relationship with an unbeliever, or is it a more practical exhortation on the dangers of freely entering into collaboration with someone who is unclean? And how does this affect the urgency of our witness in all forms of mission?

Homiletic Hooks

Of course, all of this will be sterile rambling if we cannot communicate the concept to the average believer. From the perspective of immediate imputa-
tion, the bridge was the "representative nature of Adam's headship." From there we could appeal to analogies of presidential or fatherly decisions that bear long-term consequences for those for whom they act. Uncleanness seems very alien to our culture and therefore will need massive translation. Several homiletic hooks can catch the imagination of the hearer and transform this concept into a useful doctrine.

To understand the offensiveness of our depravity we can again appeal to the image of God referred to above (see "Alien Guilt"). We, too, find gross abnormality offensive. But we can take it further. We are not merely objects out there but the personal creation of God. We, too, would be aggravated by a creation that refused to respond. For instance, suppose one of us invents a lawn mower. We engineer into it the finest in grass-cutting tooling. We pamper it with the finest of fuels, lubricants, and protectants. We store it carefully and keep the blade sharp. It runs efficiently, but cuts not grass. How would we respond?

The Gospels abound with imagery that may assist us. We can point to Jesus' responding to the offense of our unclean nature in cursing the fruitless fig tree in Mark 11:1-25 or in the parable of the unfruitful tree in Luke 13:6-9. These not only represent calls to repentance but question whether those addressed even have the ability (nature) to produce fruit. If not, they represent an offense to the maker/owner that calls down the curse of death. Indeed, Christ points in this direction when he notes that, "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit" (Matt. 7:18). John the Baptist, too, warns about the consequences of unfruitfulness (Luke 3:9).

A second bridge will be needed for the concept of being born in a culpable state of being. Our culture is inclined to think of infants as innocent until they do evil, and equally liable to consider infant acts as infantile rather than evil, born of ignorance and immaturity rather than depravity. Here we might cautiously borrow from interspecies comparisons. I have a personal theory on the difference between cat lovers and dog lovers. Dog lovers love dogs because they can represent (at their best) what we fantasize people might be at their best: loyal, friendly, loving, willing, teachable. As a cat lover, I accept an animal that more closely resembles fallen humanity: aloof, self-centered, irritable, unteachable. Such characterizations, of course, caricature reality. But no sensible person really expects a cat to achieve the personable nature of a dog. By nature, cats display behaviors we would find unacceptable in humans. And if they were people, they would offend our moral sense, pouncing and scratching and doing pretty much what they please from birth. Our first parents were created as dogs, but they became cats, and so we are born cats, with all the offense that this entails.

Again, the Bible supplies an opening in Paul's phrase, "We were by nature objects of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). Our nature (who we are from birth, not what we do after birth) offends God to the point of judgment. Here, too, the image of circumcision from Genesis 17 comes into play. The infant male child, by
nature, has an aspect that must be cut away to be acceptable before God. Any child whose unclean foreskin is not removed, God rejects (Gen. 17:14).

Finally, the concept of Christ's contagious righteousness steps us beyond the pedestrian evangelical shibboleths of salvation such as, 'Jesus paid for my sins.' The sacrifice of Jesus covers over our consistent offensiveness and, by the indwelling Holy Spirit, his presence works to decontaminate our nature. Lately, geneticists and doctors have increasingly discussed the potential of gene therapy for undoing latent genetic inclination to disease. What better analogy to the effect of the Spirit in our spiritual nature?

This transformation of being echoes in several passages. "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). The concept of "new birth" (John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:3) holds latent the concept of a renewed nature. Indeed, Paul's opening salvo regarding the life of gratitude in Romans 12:2 calls on us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Such transformation and renewal indicates that the nature-renewing power lies within us who are in Christ Jesus and in the Spirit.

The Bible supplies several analogies to this renewal's being contagious beyond us. Christ's claim that we are "the salt of the world" (Matt. 5:13) sets us firmly in the center of contagious renewal. Images of detergent and antibacterial soaps that, by nature, cleanse what they touch, might be modern equivalents. We might use this with Paul's discussion of Christ's contagious righteousness sanctifying the unbelieving spouse (1 Cor. 7:14). The antiseptic flow of righteousness in the relationship cleanses (at least outwardly) the spouse of the offensive stench, making him or her suitable in the relationship and rendering the children clean before God.

Homiletic Pitfalls

Introducing a new paradigm also leaves us open to new dangers. We cannot allow our explanations to confuse the shadow for the reality of things that have come. In the uncleanness codes of the Pentateuch, many types of people are singled out for exclusion. The sick, the deformed, and the menstruating all found themselves excluded in various ways from fellowship with God and his people. In using these categories, we must guard against letting people think that the concept of "culpable state of being" implies that such obviously diseased and genetically distorted natures offend God greater than the rest or that such physical signs of human depravity indicate greater sin and condemnation. Such was the error of the disciples in John 9:2, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Although I have stated that physical genetic defects that affect moral behavior cannot detract from culpability, this does not imply that it adds to that culpability. And amoral defects, though emblematic of our inner culpable state, merely expose in some what all of our nature's resemble before God.
Similarly, we must guard against the sorts of theonomistic thinking that would resurrect the food regulations. Any use of these texts should clearly indicate the provisional and tutorial goal of these passages. A heavy emphasis or the vision of Peter (Acts 10) will clearly display that such are merely metaphors and have not enduring spiritual worth.

An easy triumphalism could creep into any exposition of Christ's contagious righteousness. We must always make explicit that in all our theology God "talks down" to us, describing a greater spiritual reality with limited human-scale metaphors. The image of Christ's instantly vanquishing diseased uncleanness and death cannot imply that every believer finds themselves instantly beyond depravity. Nor can we imply that those we "sanctify" by our alliance or marriage become less depraved. We must emphasize that the instantaneous healings and/or cleansings reveal the thoroughness of Christ's saving work but not its timetable. Sanctification still transforms our natures slowly and incompletely until death or Christ arrive.

Summary

The words of Eve in Genesis 3:2, "you shall not touch it," have been grossly misrepresented. They are not the expression of prefall apostasy or weak-mindedness on the part of the first woman. They communicate to God's redeemed people that the Fall and original sin can be understood through the metaphor of uncleanness. Thus, our guilt resides, not first of all in what we do, but in what we are. In the same light, our redemption does not reside, in what we do. It resides in who we become identified as in Christ Jesus and transformed into by the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as the uncleanness of depravity is contagious and spreading, so the righteousness of Christ to, in, and through us can contagiously roll back the sin of the world.

I have endeavored to raise questions in this article to spur us to further reflection on original sin and to suggest some ways of communicating this new paradigm homiletically. If I have accomplished nothing else but to generate renewed interest in the reality of sin and our culpability before God, I will be grateful.

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The Creation Account in Genesis 1.1-3

Part I: Introduction to Biblical Cosmogony

Bruce K. Waltke

Until about a century ago, most persons living within Western culture found their answer to the question of cosmogony in the first words of the Bible: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." But today their descendants turn more and more to encyclopedias or other books on universal knowledge. There, both in text and in picture, an entirely different origin is presented. In place of God they find a cloud of gas, and in place of a well-organized universe they find a blob of mud. Instead of beginning with the Spirit of God, the new story begins with inanimate matter which, through some blind force inherent in the material substance, brought the world to its present state during the course of billions of years. This substitution of matter for spirit accounts for the death of Western civilization as known about a century ago.

Why has the new generation turned from the theologian to the scientist for the answer to his nagging question about the origin of the universe? In a provocative work D. F. Payne addressed himself to this question.¹ He concluded that the switch came about because of a threefold attack on the first chapter of Genesis during the latter half of the last century.

CHALLENGES TO BIBLICAL COSMOGONY

First, there came the challenge of the scientific community. In the wake of Charles Darwin's revolutionary hypothesis of


EDITOR’S NOTE: This is the first in a series of articles first delivered by the author as the Bueermann-Champion Foundation Lectures at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, Oregon, October 1-4, 1974, and adapted from Creation and Chaos (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974).
evolution to explain the origin of species, the majority of the scientific community fell in with Darwin's hypothesis against the Bible. They believed they could validate Darwin's theory by empirical data, but they thought that they could not do the same for the Bible.

The second challenge came from the comparative religionists who sought to discredit the biblical story by noting the numerous points of similarity between it and ancient mythological creation accounts from various parts of the Near East being studied at that time. If Darwin's work, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, was the bellwether for the scientific challenge, Hermann Gunkel's work, *Schopfung und Chaos*, persuaded many that the Hebrews from their entrance into Canaan had a fairly complete creation myth like all the other ancient cosmogonic myths. But in Israel's story, according to Gunkel, Yahweh took the place of the pagan hero gods. According to his view, the Hebrew version of creation was just another Near Eastern folktale, which was improved in the process of time by the story transmitters' creative and superior philosophical and theological insights.

The third challenge came from literary criticism. The case was stated most persuasively by Julius Wellhausen in his most influential classic, first published in 1878 and still in print under the title, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*. Here he argued that there were at least two distinct accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and that these two accounts contradicted each other at various points.

This threefold challenge radically altered the shape of theological education throughout Europe and America. The position of most of the educators at the turn of the century is tersely caught in this pronouncement by Zimmern and Cheyne in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*:

> It may be regarded as an axiom of modern study that the descriptions [note the plural] of creation contained in the biblical records, and especially in Gen. 1:1-2:4a, are permanently valuable only in so far as they express certain religious truths which are still recognized as such. To seek for even a kernel of historical fact in such cosmogonies is inconsistent with a scientific point of view.

4 *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. s. v. "Creation."
Payne observed, "By the year 1900, therefore, many people had been educated to believe that the Bible's statements about creation were neither accurate, inspired, nor consistent." No wonder the sons of the fathers turned their backs on their heritage as they sought to answer the question, "How did the world originate?"

The purpose of this series of articles is not to reappraise the apology for the biblical account of creation. But it seems imprudent to address oneself to this subject without taking note of the debate between reaction and evolution.

Perhaps the author can best state his position by a personal anecdote. Last spring, through the mediation of one of his students, who was both a premedical and a theological student, the author was requested by his student's professor in a course on genetics at Southern Methodist University to give a lecture defending the creationist viewpoint. The thesis the author presented was that evolution is a faith position that cannot be supported by empirical data. In the field of genetics, for example, it can be demonstrated that microevolution takes place but it cannot be demonstrated that macroevolution has occurred. To illustrate, it is well known that the varieties of gulls inhabiting the northern hemisphere between North America and Western Siberia interbreed with one another in the middle of the ring, but those at the end of the ring do not interbreed. Therefore, by a strict definition of species, it appears almost certain that by natural selection distinct species arose on this planet. But what cannot be proved -- and this is essential if the theory of general evolution is to stand -- is that one of these species of gulls is superior to another, that is, that it has a new functioning organ with a genetic capacity to carry it on. To this writer's knowledge there is no observed instance of the development of a cell to greater specificity.

G. A. Kerkut, professor of physiology and biochemistry at the University of Southampton, concluded:

\[ \ldots \text{there is the theory that all the living forms in the world have arisen from a single source which itself came from an inorganic form. This theory can be called the General Theory of Evolution, and the evidence that supports it is not sufficiently strong to allow us to consider it as anything more than a working hypothesis.}\]

During the questioning session that followed the lecture, the basic thesis was accepted by both professor and students, but their next question was, "Why should we accept your faith position instead of ours?"

5 Payne, *Genesis One Reconsidered*, p. 5.
Now the author is not suggesting that by this one experience he has refuted the hypothesis of evolution, but he is maintaining that all answers which attempt to explain the origin of the universe are essentially faith positions. The question that the LORD asked of Job is asked of every man: "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" (38:4) Since science is the systematic analysis of presently observed processes and their phenomena, science cannot and ought not attempt to answer the question of the origin of the universe. The answer is beyond the range of empirical proof.

IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL COSMOGONY

But it may be asked, "What difference does all this make?" It is important because the question of cosmogony is closely related to one's entire world view. Someone has said that our world view is like the umpire at a ball game. He seems unimportant and the players are hardly aware of him, but in reality he decides the ball game. So likewise one's world view lies behind every decision a person makes. It makes a difference whether we come from a mass of matter or from the hand of God. How we think the world started will greatly influence our understanding of our identity, our relationship to others, our values, and our behavior. Because the question of cosmogony is important for understanding some of the basic issues of life, intelligent men throughout recorded history have sought the answer to this question. Just as the knowledge of the future is crucial for making basic choices in life, so also the knowledge of beginnings is decisive in establishing a man's or a culture's Weltanschaung ("world view"). No wonder the Bible reveals both.

Because of man's limitation as a creature, he must receive this knowledge by revelation from the Creator. Moreover, because of the noetic effects of sin, he needs to be reborn before he can comprehend that revelation.

The Christian faith rests on God as the first Cause of all things. God has created man a rational creature, and while the Christian's faith does not rest on rationalism, he should be able to validate and defend his position. Therefore, we applaud and encourage those engaged in apologetics.

Ancient myths died at just this point; they could not be believed because there came into man's experience too much contradictory evidence. As long as the world view assumed by the myth satisfactorily accommodated the apparent realities of the
objective world, it served as a plausible explanation of things and gave a cohesive force to the community. But when that world view slipped radically out of line with the general experience of "the way things are," it ceased to be effective, Mary Douglas, in her work *Purity and Danger*, made the helpful analogy that myth and ritual are like money in providing a medium of exchange. As the test of money is whether it is acceptable or not, so primitive ritual is like good money so long as it commands assent.

It is precisely because of this incongruity between myth and reality that the old liberal myth of man's self-progress died. Anderson rightly observed:

> It is worthy of note that contemporary poets give expression to a sense of catastrophe. . . . As Amos Wilder points out, poets like John Masefield and Alfred Noyes, Vachel Lindsay and Edwin Markham, even Robert Browning and Alfred Tennyson, and many others who reflected the buoyant optimism of the nineteenth century doctrine of progress, no longer speak to our situation. Where are the Browning clubs or the Tennyson circle? They are gone because man can no longer believe in his own self-made Utopia.

Orlinsky made this point well when addressing the symposium of the annual meeting of the American Learned Society in 1960:

> The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the earlier part of our own twentieth, are not unfairly labeled by historians as the age of reason, enlightenment, ideology, and analysis -- in short, the age of science. In this extremely exciting epoch, man began increasingly to reject, and then to ignore the Bible, the revealed Word of God, for more than two thousand years preceding, as the ultimate source of knowledge by which the problems of society could be resolved. Man began to depend upon his own powers of observation and analysis to probe into the secrets of the universe and its inhabitants.

> Rationalists, political scientists, economists, historians, philosophers, psychologists -- the two centuries preceding our own times are full of great minds who grappled with societal problem, and proposed for them solutions of various kinds. . . . If only reason prevailed in man's relations to his fellowman -- the kind of universal peace and personal contentment that religion had been promising humanity for over two thousand years would finally come to pass.

Alas, this has not come to pass. If anything the opposite seems to prevail. Ever since World War I in the teens, the world depression of the early thirties, the rise of fascism in Europe, the horrors of World War II, the cold and hot and lukewarm wars of the past decade and a half, increasing unemployment and automation, and the rather frequent recessions, it has become ever more clear that reason alone was unable to bring our problems closer to solution. And so, people have begun to come back to Holy Scripture, to the Bible.9

In a word, the challenge has failed, and its alternative hypothesis has left the world spiritually bankrupt. We are reminded of Simon's answer when the Lord asked the Twelve if they too would leave Him: "To whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

But unfortunately, when we turn to the theologians we discover that those who study the Scriptures have not as yet established a consensus of opinion regarding the meaning of the first two verses of the Bible. In this series of articles the author hopes to familiarize his readers with the positions advocated and to defend his own conclusion.

ASSUMPTION UNDERLYING BIBLICAL COSMOGONY

Four assumptions underlie the method used in this series.

1. The validity of the philological approach used by the rabbis of Spain during the ninth century A.D. is assumed, in contrast to the mystical approach employed by their French peers.

2. The historical method of interpretation will be employed as faithfully as possible. Through the tools at our disposal, we must work our way back into the world of the biblical authors if we hope to understand their message.

The biblical authors themselves make it abundantly plain that they were a part of their world, and that they originated out of the nations of their time and place. For example, concerning the list of nations in Genesis 10, Eichrodt observed:

The list of nations in Gen. 10, which is unique in ancient Eastern languages, includes Israel, proudly conscious though it is of its preferential historical position, in the general context of humanity. No claim is made for Israel of any fundamentally different natural capacity or "inherited nobility" which set it apart from the rest of the nations.10

One of Israel's earliest creeds begins with this humble confession: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there" (Deut. 26:5). Ezekiel deflates the pretentious pride of his fellow countrymen by reminding them, "Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite" (Ezek. 16:3).

These notices of their common origins with the other peoples of the ancient Near East went by largely unnoticed until one day in 1872. At that time George Smith, a young Assyriologist employed as an assistant in the British Museum, was sorting and classifying tablets excavated from Nineveh about twenty years earlier. In the course of his work he was struck by a line on one of the tablets. He later wrote of this epoch-making moment:

Commencing a steady search among these fragments, I soon found half of a curious tablet which had evidently contained originally six columns. . . . On looking down the third column, my eye caught the statement that the ship rested on the mountains of Nizir, followed by the account of the sending forth of the dove, and its finding no resting place and returning. I saw at once that I had here discovered a portion at least of the Chaldean account of the Deluge.12

But that was not all. Included among the religious texts from Ashurbanipal's library at Nineveh was the Babylonian creation myth known as Enuma Elish (after its opening words "When on high") -- a relatively late version of an ancient myth which dates back to at least the First Babylonian Dynasty (ca. 1830-1530 B.C.), whose greatest king was Hammurabi (ca. 1728-1686 B.C.). This myth was first published by George Smith in 1876 under the title The Babylonian Account of Genesis.

It was on the basis of Smith's work that Gunkel wrote his most influential work on creation and chaos in the Old Testament. Though few will be enamored with Gunkel's clever analysis, no serious student of Scripture today should give less attention to this material than that given by Gunkel.

Having analyzed our material by the philologico-grammatical approach, we must attempt to classify and systematize it. The texts of the Old Testament bearing on cosmogony may be grouped into four divisions: (a) texts describing the creation under the figure of

Yahweh's combat with the sea monster; (b) Genesis 1; (c) texts from the wisdom school bearing on creation, namely Psalm 104, Job 38, and Proverbs 8; and (d) the use of creation by Isaiah as he addressed the exiles in Babylon.

4. Any given text must be interpreted within the realm of Old Testament thought. Eichrodt's words are pointed but well taken:

In deciding, therefore, on our procedure for the treatment of the realm of OT thought, we must avoid all schemes which derive from Christian dogmatics -- such, for example, as "Theology-Anthropology-Soteriology," "ordo salutis," and so on. Instead we must plot our course as best we can along the lines of the OT's own dialect.  

In a word, we must try to extrapolate from the Old Testament itself its unifying concepts and interpret the texts bearing on cosmogony within those categories.

CREATION AND THE RAHAB-LEVIATHAN THEME

In several passages of the Old Testament, reference is made to God's conflict with a dragon or sea monster named as Rahab, "The Proud One," or Leviathan, "The Twisting One." At least five of these texts are in a context pertaining to the creation of the world, and it is for this reason that these are considered in this series on creation. An understanding of these passages will aid in understanding the Genesis creation account. For example, in Job 26:12-13 we read: "He quieted the sea with His power, and by His understanding He shattered Rahab. By His breath the heavens are cleared; His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent." In Psalm 74:13-17 it is recorded: "Thou didst break the heads of the sea-monsters in the waters, Thou didst crush the heads of Leviathan; Thou didst give him as food for the creatures of the wilderness. Thou didst break open springs and torrents; Thou didst dry up ever-flowing streams, Thine is the day, Thine is the night; Thou hast prepared the light and the sun. Thou hast established all the boundaries of the earth; Thou hast made summer and winter,"

Three questions may be asked about these passages: Who are the monsters? How are we to interpret references to them in the Old Testament? What is the significance of these references? These questions pertain to identification, interpretation, and significance.

14 Rahab is referred to in Job 9:13; 26:12; Pss. 87:4; 89:10; Isa. 30:7; and 51:9. Leviathan is mentioned in Job 3:8; 41:1; Pss. 74:14; 104:26; and Isa. 27:1.
IDENTIFICATION

To identify Rahab and Leviathan. Wakeman turned to the mythological lore of the ancient Near East. After analyzing twelve myths from Sumer, India, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Canaan, she concluded that in spite of their great variety, all the battle myths are, as she put it, "about the same thing." Her analysis showed that at the core of the myths three features were always present: (1) a repressive monster restraining creation, (2) the defeat of the monster by the heroic god who thereby releases the forces essential for life, and (3) the hero's final control over these forces.

These myths of the ancient Near East identify Rahab or Leviathan as an antirect creation dragon monster. Interestingly, the biblical texts that refer to Rahab or Leviathan imply these same three features found in these other mythical cosmogonies.

Job 3: 8 makes it clear that Leviathan is a repressive, antirect creation monster who swallows up life. Job said: "Let those curse it who curse the day, who are prepared to rouse Leviathan."

Summarizing the context of this verse, Fishbane concluded:

The whole thrust of the text in Job iii 1-13 is to provide a systematic bouleversement, or reversal, of the cosmicizing acts of creation described in Gen. i-ii 4a. Job, in the process of cursing the day of his birth (v. 1), binds, spell to spell in his articulation of an absolute and unrestrained death wish for himself and the entire creation.

In several passages this repressive antirect creation monster is associated with the sea. For example, Psalm 89:9-10 reads: "Thou dost rule the swelling of the sea; when its waves rise, Thou dost still them. Thou thyself didst crush Rahab like one who is slain; Thou didst scatter Thine enemies with Thy right arm." Isaiah 27:1b reads, "He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea." Job 26:12-13 and Psalm 74:13-17, cited earlier, also associate this monster with the sea, as do Psalms 89:10; 104:26; and Isaiah 27:1.

The other two features, viz., the destruction of the monster and the controlling of life forces by the destroyer, are also seen in several of the biblical Rahab-Leviathan passages. For example,
Isaiah 51:9 states that Yahweh cut Rahab in pieces and pierced the dragon, and Psalm 89:10 mentions that Yahweh crushed Rahab and quelled the turbulent sea associated with the dragon.

Gordon's study of leviathan in both the Bible and the Ugaritic texts puts the case beyond doubt.\(^{19}\) He convincingly demonstrated that the myth about Rahab-Leviathan belongs to the mythology of ancient Canaan.

**INTERPRETATION**

Having established that Leviathan in the Canaanite mythology is a dragon resisting creation, we must raise the hermeneutical question whether the inspired poets of Israel meant that Yahweh actually had a combat with this hideous creature or whether this Canaanite story served as a helpful metaphor to describe Yahweh's creative activity. If we assume that the biblical authors were logical -- and they were that and far more -- then we must opt for the second interpretation of these references. The poets who mention this combat also abhor the pagan idolatry and insist on a strict monotheism.

Job, for example, protested his innocence by claiming: "If I have looked at the sun when it shone, or the moon going in splendor; and my heart became secretly enticed, and my hand threw a kiss from my mouth, that too would have been an iniquity calling for judgment, for I would have denied God above" (Job 31:26-28). Isaiah, who stated that Yahweh hewed Rahab and pierced the dragon (Isa. 51:9), also wrote, "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel. . . : 'I am the first, and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me'" (Isa. 44:6). Similar words are stated later by Isaiah: "That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me; I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD, who does all these" (Isa. 45:6-7).

Allen stated the issue well when he concluded, "The problem. . . is not one of borrowed theology but one of borrowed imagery."\(^{20}\) The biblical prophets and poets, who were accustomed to clothing their ideas in poetic garb, elucidating them with the help of simile, and employing the familiar devices of poetry, were


not, to be sure, deterred from using what they found at hand in Israel's epic poetry, McKenzie observed:

It does not seem possible any longer to deny the presence of mythological allusions in the Old Testament. They appear almost entirely, as far as present research has shown, in poetic passages, where they add vividness and color to the imagery and language. They do not, on the other hand, permit one to affirm the existence of creation myths among the Hebrews, corresponding to those of Mesopotamia and Canaan. Gunkel's brilliant attempt to do this was a conspicuous failure. The creation accounts of the Bible were studiously composed to exclude mythological elements. The fact that such allusions were freely admitted in poetry indicates no more than this, that the Hebrews were acquainted with Semitic myths. Where these are cosmogonic myths, the work of the creative deity, or his victory over chaos, is simply transferred to Yahweh; other deities involved in the myths are ignored. In no sense can it be said that the Hebrews incorporated "mythropoeic thought" (to borrow a word from Frankfort) into their own religious conceptions; they did, however, assimilate mythopoeic imagery and language.21

It is inconceivable that these strict monotheists intended to support their view from pagan mythology, which they undoubtedly detested and abominated, unless they were sure that their hearers would understand that their allusions were used in a purely figurative sense.

A study of the texts in which the Rahab-Leviathan emblem is found shows that the biblical authors used it in one of three ways. First, as seen in the texts considered thus far, they employed the figure to describe God's creative activity in the prehistoric past. Second, the symbol of Yahweh's victory over the dragon is used as symbolic of Yahweh's victory over Pharaoh and Israel's enemies in the historic present. They were particularly fond of using Rahab as a nickname for Pharaoh at the time of the Exodus. Rahab evoked appropriate feelings of Yahweh's victory in creating Israel by destroying the oppressive tyrant and drying up his restraining sea. In Isaiah 30: 7 the prophet, referring to Egypt, wrote, "Therefore I have called her Rahab who has been exterminated." Later when Isaiah calls for the second exodus, this time from the oppressive Babylonian, he commands: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not Thou who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? Was it not Thou who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a

pathway for the redeemed to cross over?" (Isa. 51:9-10) As Anderson observed: "It was then that Yahweh slew the monster Rahab, separated the Great Deep (tehom rabbah) so that the people could pass through (44:27), [and] rebuked the rebellious Sea (Yam; 51:10).\(^n\)\(^{22}\)

Third, whereas Yahweh's poets used the symbol of Rahab to depict His triumph at creation in the prehistoric past, and the prophets employed the story for His victories over Israel's political enemies in the historic present, the apocalyptic seers used it to portray Yahweh's final triumph over the ultimate enemy behind all history, even Satan, in the posthistoric future. Thus in Isaiah we read: "In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, with His fierce and great and mighty sword, even Leviathan the twisted serpent; and He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea" (Isa, 27:1). More clearly John says in his apocalypse: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. And the dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him" (Rev. 12:7-9).

SIGNIFICANCE

In all these passages, the literary allusions to Yahweh's defeat of Rahab serve to underscore the basic thought of the Old Testament: Yahweh will triumph over all His enemies in the establishment of His rule of righteousness. Negatively, the allusion serves as a polemic against the gods of the foreign kingdoms. Not Baal of the Canaanites, not Marduk of the Babylonians, not Pharaoh of Egypt, but Yahweh, God of Israel, author of Torah, triumphs. As the Creator of the cosmos, He triumphed at the time of creation; as Creator of history, He triumphs in the historic present; and as Creator of the new heavens and the new earth, He will triumph in the future.

22 Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos*, p. 128. Incidentally, it may be noted that in contrast to Moses' rod which turned into a serpent (Exod, 4:3). Aaron's rod turned into a dragon (Exod. 7:12). It was Aaron's draconic rod that swallowed the draconic rods of the Egyptians. The point of the incident is now clear: The rod is a symbol of rulership, and God thus demonstrated that His kingdom would swallow up Pharaoh's kingdom. Moreover, God indicated that He would subsume its powers within His own dominion. The psalmist accordingly looked forward to the day when Egypt will be incorporated into Yahweh's rule: "shall mention Rahab and Babylon among those who know Me" (Ps. 87:4).
The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3

Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1

Bruce K. Waltke

Moses' revelation of God, given through the Holy Spirit's inspiration, conflicted diametrically with the concepts of the gods and goddesses found in the nations all around him. Moses differed with the pagan religions precisely in the conceptualization of the relationship of God to the creation. To all other peoples of the ancient Near East, creation was the work of gods and goddesses. The forces of nature, personalized as gods and goddesses, were mutually interrelated and often locked in conflict. Moreover, their myths about the role of these gods and goddesses in creation were at the very heart of their religious celebrations. These stories about Ninurta and Asag, Marduk and Tiamat, Baal and Yamm, did not serve to entertain the people, nor did they serve merely to explain how the creation originated. The adherents of these myths believed that by myth (word) and by ritual (act) they could reenact these myths in order to sustain the creation. Life, order, and society, depended on the faithful celebration of the ritual connected with the myth. For example, concerning the Enuma elish, Sarna wrote:

Recorded in seven tablets, it was solemnly recited and dramatically presented in the course of the festivities marking the Spring New Year, the focal point of the Babylonian religious calendar. It was,

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fourth in a series of articles first delivered by the author as the Bueermann-Champion Foundation Lectures at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, Oregon, October 1-4, 1974, and adapted from Creation and Chaos (Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974).
in effect, the myth that sustained Babylonian civilization, that buttressed its societal norms and its organizational structure.¹

But the revelation of God in Scripture is diametrically opposed to these degraded notions about God. If, then, the essential difference between the Mosaic faith and the pagan faith differed precisely in their conceptualization of the relationship of God to the creation, is it conceivable that Moses should have left the new nation under God without an accurate account of the origin of the creation? To this writer such a notion is incredible. Anderson touched on the source critic's problem when he noted: "Considering the impressive evidences of the importance of the creation-faith in pagan religion during the second millennium B.C., it is curious that in Israel's faith during its formative and creative period (1300-1000 B.C.), the belief in Yahweh as Creator apparently had a second place."² His choice of the word curious for this tension is curious. The dilemma for the critic is intolerable. The only satisfying solution is to grant Mosaic authorship to the narrative of Genesis 1. Once that is clear, the theological function of the chapter is also clear.

Moses, the founder of the new nation, intended this introductory chapter to have both a negative and a positive function. Negatively, it serves as a polemic against the myths of Israel’s environment; positively, it teaches man about the nature of God.

THE POLEMICAL FUNCTION OF GENESIS 1
Before considering the discontinuity between the pagan cosmogonies and Genesis 1, however, it is only fair to consider first the points of continuity between these myths and Scripture.

THE CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE CREATION MYTHS AND GENESIS 1

The evidence of the continuity. First, there is a literary continuity. It has been noted, for example, that both the Enuma elish³ and Genesis 1:2-3 begin with circumstantial clauses followed by the main account of the creation.⁴ Also in both accounts the circumstantial

3 Many other versions of Babylonian creation myths are listed by Alexander Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. 61-81, but the Enuma elish may be taken as representative of them.
clauses serve a negative function. Westermann referred to these as the "when-not-yet sentence materials from the ancient Near East and Egypt." This same pattern prevails in Genesis 1:2-3; 2:4b-7; Proverbs 8:24-26; and Ezekiel 16:4-5. As Hasel commented: "In these passages as in the ancient Near Eastern materials, long series of descriptions negate later conditions of the world through formula-like 'when not yet' sentences." Of course, this continuity of literary structure comes as no surprise, for Israel belonged physically to the peoples of the ancient Near East. Her language was Canaanite and her literary compositions, in their physical outward form, conformed to the literary conventions of her age.

Second, there are points of similarity in their content. Both accounts present a primeval, dark, watery, and formless state prior to creation, and neither account attributes this state to the Creator/creator. Also the two accounts agree about the order of the creation. Heidel has charted these basic similarities in detail between the chronological sequence of the creation of the cosmos in the two accounts.

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<tr>
<th>Enuma elish</th>
<th>Genesis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Divine spirit and cosmic matter are coexistent and coeternal</td>
<td>Divine spirit creates cosmic matter and exists independently of it</td>
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<td>Primeval chaos; Tiamat enveloped in darkness</td>
<td>The earth a desolate waste, with darkness covering the deep</td>
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<td>Light emanating from the gods</td>
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<td>The creation of man</td>
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<td>The gods rest and celebrate</td>
<td>God rests and sanctifies the seventh day</td>
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8 Ibid., p. 97.
9 Ibid., p. 129.
The explanation of the continuity. How can these correspondences be explained? One answer is that Israel's neighbors borrowed from her. But this is improbable for it is almost certain that many of these ancient Near Eastern myths antedate Moses.10

Another explanation is that the similarities are purely coincidental. D. F. Payne noted that Ryle, Gerhard von Rad, and Kinnier Wilson hold this view, and then concluded, "It must probably remain an open question whether . . . the correspondence [is] coincidental."11

The most common explanation of those scholars who regard the world as a closed system without divine intervention is that Israel borrowed these mythologies, demythologized them, purged them of their gross and base polytheism, and gradually adopted them to their own developing and higher theology. Zimmern went so far as to state that the early appearance of the watery chaos in Genesis 1 "is unintelligible in the mouth of an early Israelite," for he supposed that the concept of a watery chaos was derived from the annual flooding of the Mesopotamian river.12 Of course, his argument is no longer tenable because, as Wakeman has demonstrated,13 the concept of primeval water is found across a broad spectrum of ancient myths and not confined to any one geographical area.

It is certain that Israel knew these myths and it is also possible that having borrowed them they demythologized them.14 Moreover, the biblical writers elsewhere tell us that they did use sources.15 In spite of these facts, this explanation does not satisfy because it offers no explanation for Israel's higher theology. Where did Israel get this higher theology? Why did it not appear among any other people? Neither the brilliant Greek philosophers of later ages, nor Israel's Babylonian and Egyptian contemporaries, so far ahead of them in the arts and science, attained to it. All the world was steeped in mythical thought except Israel. Her religion was like the sun compared to the night. No umbilical cord attached the faith of Moses and his successors with the other religions of the ancient Near East.

10 Ibid., pp. 130-32.
14 In this connection also see R. N. Whybray, The Heavenly Counsellor in Isaiah xl 13-14 (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1971), pp. 62-77.
Furthermore, any religion that even approaches the Mosaic faith, such as Mohammedanism, borrowed it from Israel.

Moreover, this religion did not arise from Israel itself. Over and over again they confess that they are stiffnecked and prone to conform to the religions around them. No, Israel's religion did not originate in the darkened mind and heart of man. Instead, as the prophets consistently affirm, it is a revelation from God. This is the only answer that satisfies both the mind and spirit of man. If, then, the theological content is by divine revelation, does it not follow that the historical details may also have come by divine revelation?

Genesis 1 is unlike the sources, of pagan religions in that it contains information unknowable to any man. Certainly ancient chroniclers could record events of their days and the inspired prophet-historians could use them for theological reasons. But what human author could know the historical details of the creation? It is concluded, therefore, that the explanation that Israel borrowed the material is wrong.

The only satisfying answer is that proposed by Ira M. Price of the University of Chicago. He suggested that these versions sprang from a common source of some kind. He attributed the common elements to a common inheritance of man going back to "a time when the human race occupied a common home and held a common faith." Although not citing Price, Unger holds the same view:

Early races of men wherever they wandered took with them these earliest traditions of mankind, and in varying latitudes and climes have modified them according to their religions and mode of thought. Modifications as time proceeded resulted in the corruption of the original pure tradition. The Genesis account is not only the purist, but everywhere bears the unmistakable impress of divine inspiration when compared with the extravagances and corruptions of other accounts. The Biblical narrative, we may conclude, represents the original form these traditions must have assumed.

Isaiah confirms this explanation for he implies that God's people know of the creation from the beginning itself. He 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. 40:24).

THE DISCONTINUITY BETWEEN THE CREATION MYTHS AND GENESIS 1

While there is a similarity in literary form and in rudimentary content, the biblical account radically differs from the creation myths of the ancient Near East in its theological stance.

For one thing, the creation myths are stories about numerous gods and goddesses personifying cosmic spaces or forces in nature. They are nature deities. The pagan mind did not distinguish spirit from matter. For them all of nature consisted of personalities combining divine spirit and cosmic matter in an eternal coexistence. Thus the sun was a god and the moon was a god. Even Akhenaten, the so-called first monotheist, never conceived of Aten, the sun god, any differently. He distinguished himself by selecting only one force of nature and, of course, never could find a following. Did not the other forces of nature also need to be worshiped?

In Canaan at the time of the Conquest, each city had its own temple dedicated to some force of nature. The name Jericho derives from the Hebrew word, נ所以他, which means "moon"; Jericho's inhabitants worshiped the moon, the god "Yerach." Likewise, on the other side of the central ridge of Palestine is the city of Beth-shemesh, which means "Temple of the Sun"; Shamash, the sun god, was worshiped there. It is against this environment that one can appreciate the significance of the stories about the Conquest. Yahweh, the God of Israel, did not consist of the forces of nature but stood majestically transcendent above them. He fought for Israel. He compelled these high gods of Canaan to hide their faces at noonday. Concerning the account in Joshua 9, Wilson wrote:

> At the prayer of Israel's leader, both of their chief deities, the sun and the moon, were darkened, or eclipsed. So, as we can well imagine would be the case, they were terrified beyond measure, thinking that the end of all things had come; and they were discomfited and smitten and turned and fled.18

The second element of the darkened pagan view of the universe is summarized in the catchwords "myth" and "ritual." The "creation myth," so widespread in the ancient Near East, did not serve primarily to satisfy man's intellectual curiosity about the origin of the world. Man was not concerned about history as such. He was rather concerned about continuing the stability of the natural world and the society to which he belonged. How could he guarantee that the orderly life achieved in the beginning by the triumph of the creative

forces over the inert forces would continue? Chaos was ever threaten-
ing to break down the structures of his life. His solution to the
dilemma was by means of myth and ritual. By the use of magical
words (myth) accompanying the performance of certain all-impor-
tant religious festivals (ritual) he thought he could guarantee the
stability of life. The myth, spoken magically at the high religious
festivals, served as the libretto of the community liturgy. It declared
in word what the ritual was designed to ensure through action. Sarna
summarized the role of myth and ritual thus:

Myth, therefore, in the ancient world was mimetically re-
enacted in public festivals to the accompaniment of ritual. The
whole complex constituted imitative magic, the effect of which was
believed to be beneficial to the entire community. Through ritual
drama, the primordial events recorded in the myth were reactivated.
The enactment at the appropriate season of the creative deeds of
the gods, and the recitation of the proper verbal formulae, it was
believed, would effect the periodic renewal and revitalization of
nature and so assure the prosperity of the community.19

Against this background, the polemical function of the first
chapter of Genesis is evident. Not that the tone is polemical; pre-
cisely the opposite. As Cassuto noted, "The language is tranquil,
undisturbed by polemic or dispute; the controversial note is heard
indirectly, as it were, through the deliberate, quiet utterances of
Scripture."20 By a simple straightforward account of the way it
happened, the biblical account corrects the disturbed pagan notions.
Here there is no theogony. No one begot God; God created all.
Stuhmueller commented: "Alone among all Semitic creative gods,
Yahweh underwent no birth, no metamorphosis."21 Moreover, here
there is no theomachy. The Spirit of God does not contend with a
living hostile chaotic force, but hovers over the primordial mass
awaiting the appropriate time for history to begin. How can the chaos
be hostile when it is not living but inanimate? It can only be shaped
according to the will of the Creator. The sun, moon, and stars, wor-
shiped by the pagans, are reduced to the status of "lamps" (Gen.
1:16). The dreaded יָרֵם ("dragons") are created (ם) by
God, who calls them good (v. 21). McKenzie put it this way:

19 Sarna, Understanding Genesis, p. 7.
20 Umberto Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, trans. Israel
21 Carroll Stuhmueller, "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaias,"
Against this background, the Hebrew account of origins can scarcely be anything else but a counterstatement to the myth of creation.... The Hebrew author enumerates all the natural forces in which deity was thought to reside, and of all of them he says simply that God made them. Consequently, he eliminates all elements of struggle on the cosmic level; the visible universe is not an uneasy balance of forces, but it is moderated by one supreme will, which imposes itself with effortless supremacy upon all that it has made. By preference the author speaks of the created work rather than of the creative act, because he wishes to emphasize the fact that the creative Deity, unlike Marduk, has not had to win his supremacy by combat with an equal.22

Instead of cosmic deities locked in mortal combat, God the Creator works calmly as a craftsman in his shop. There is no more danger that He will fall before the monster of chaos than there is that the chair will devour the carpenter.23

As von Rad said, Genesis 1 is not a demythologized narrative but a distinctly antimythical narrative.24 Thus the creation was "disencharnted," to use the language of the sociologist of religion, Max Weber. By speaking the truth in a world of lies, God emancipated man from the fear of creation to the freedom to research it and bring it under his dominion. Here, then, was the sound philosophical foundation on which true science could progress. Man could now stand at a distance from matter as an observer, calm and unafraid.

THE THEOLOGY OF GOD ACCORDING TO GENESIS 1

Genesis 1 points to several activities of God and also reveals several attributes of God. His activities as the Creator, Savior, and Ruler are discussed in the following paragraphs and His attributes will be discussed in the next article in this series.

GOD AS THE CREATOR

Foundational to an understanding of God is the truth that He is the Creator above and apart from His creation. The faith that God was the Creator of heaven and earth and not coexistent and coeternal with the creation distinguished Israel's faith from all other religions.

Here was the basis for fellowship between Abraham and Melchizedek. Although much about Melchizedek is not explained, one thing is certain: he worshiped the Creator of heaven and earth. When Melchizedek, king of Salem, met Abraham after his return

23 Ibid., p. 102.
24 Gerhard von Rad, cited by Payne, Genesis One Reconsidered, p. 22.
from defeating the kings of the East, he blessed him and said:
"Blessed be Abram of El Elyon (the Most High God), Creator of
heaven and earth" (Gen. 14:15). Abraham immediately recognized
this king-priest who worshiped the Creator rather than the creation
as his king-priest, and Abraham gave him a tenth of all. Indeed they
worshiped the same God, but instead of calling God merely by the
epithet El Elyon, Abraham added God's personal name and replied,
"I have sworn to Yahweh, El Elyon, Creator of heaven and earth"
(Gen. 14:22). By adding the personal name Yahweh, he revealed
that the Most High Creator was also the God of history, law, and
ethics, the God who would establish His kingdom on earth through
Abraham's seed.

The word for "create" used by Melchizedek in Genesis 14:19,
22 is different from the word used in Genesis 1:1. The verb trans-
lated "create" in Genesis 14 is used only four other times in the Old
Testament in the sense "to create," but it seems to have been more
frequent in the Canaanite world. It was used at Ugarit and was found
in the Phoenician inscription of Karatepe. Possibly because of his
Canaanite background Melchizedek used this more unusual word.25

At this point it may be well to digress and discuss the words for
"create" in the Old Testament. Many words, in fact, are used to
designate the creative activity of God. In addition to ברא found in
Genesis 1:1, there are יצר, "to form"; וותא, "to make"; יסד, "to
found"; ילל, "to beget"; and others. All these, with the exception of
ברא, are metaphorical for they are also used of man's creative activ-
ity. ברא, however, distinguishes itself from these other words by being
used exclusively with God as the subject. Moreover, as Julian Mor-
genstern pointed out, it "never takes the accusative of the material
from which a thing is made, as do other verbs of making, but uses
the accusative to designate only the thing made."26 Since it is used
exclusively of God and never takes the accusative of the material,
some have suggested that the word must mean "to create out of
nothing." Evidently assuming that the word meant "to create out of
nothing," in contrast to the other words for making, Scofield popu-
larized the view that there were only three creative acts of God:

25 P. Hanhert, "Qavah in Hebreu Biblique," in Festschrift Alfred Bertholet,
26 Julian Morgenstern, "The Sources of the Creation Story - Genesis
1 : 1-2:4," American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures 36 (1920)
201.
"(1) the heavens and earth, v. 1; (2) animal life, v. 21; and (3) human life, vss. 26-27."\(^{27}\)

But this distinction cannot be maintained for at least four reasons: (1) usage shows that בָּרָא does not necessarily mean "to create out of nothing"; (2) it is used synonymously with other words for "making"; (3) other words for "making" may imply that the thing made did not originate out of preexisting material; and (4) the ancient versions did not see this meaning in the word.

Two passages illustrate that בָּרָא was used to mean something other than creatio ex nihilo. In Genesis 1:27, God "created" (בָּרָא) the man, but in Genesis 2:7 God "formed" (יָצָר) the man from the earth. Moreover, בָּרָא is used with a double accusative to define the production of a new mental state; for example, in Isaiah 65:18, the Lord declares, "for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing, and her people for gladness." Gruenthaner observed: "Evidently, Jerusalem and the people are represented as being prior to the state into which they are converted."\(^{28}\) בָּרָא in Genesis 1:1 does not include the bringing into existence of the negative state described in verse 2. Rather, it means that God utilized it as a part of His creation. In this sense He created it.

That בָּרָא is used synonymously with the more colorless word עָשָׂה seems evident from the following comparisons.

Comparison of בָּרָא and עָשָׂה

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>בָּרָא</th>
<th>עָשָׂה</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 1:21</td>
<td>God created the sea monsters -- בָּרָא</td>
<td>עָשָׂה</td>
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<td>1:25</td>
<td>God made the beasts -- עָשָׂה</td>
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<td>1:26</td>
<td>God said, &quot;Let us make man&quot; -- עָשָׂה</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:27</td>
<td>And God created man -- בָּרָא</td>
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<td>2:4a</td>
<td>When the heavens and the earth were created -- בָּרָא</td>
<td>עָשָׂה</td>
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<td>1:1</td>
<td>God created the heavens and the earth -- בָּרָא</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exod. 19:11</td>
<td>God made the heavens and the earth -- עָשָׂה</td>
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<td>Gen. 1:16</td>
<td>God made the two great lights . . . and stars -- עָשָׂה</td>
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<td>Ps. 148:3, 5</td>
<td>Praise Him, sun, moon, . . . stars</td>
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<td>He commanded and they were created -- בָּרָא</td>
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<td>Isa. 40:26</td>
<td>Who created these [sun, moon, stars] -- בָּרָא</td>
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\(^{27}\) The Scofield Reference Bible (New York: Oxford University Press, 1909), p. 3.
Anderson set forth similar comparisons in the use of these words in Isaiah 40-66 and found that ידש, נחש, and ברא are all used synonymously.²⁹

Moreover, it is clear that נחש and the other verbs may designate creation by fiat ex nihilo. The doctrine of creatio ex nihilo does not depend on the verb ברא. Light was created when God spoke the words, "Let there be light" (v. 3); there is not the slightest hint that it sprang from chaos. Similarly, the firmament, which is called "heaven" and which is conceived as a vault separating the lower from the upper water, owes its existence exclusively to a divine command. The sun, moon, and stars came into existence at the sole bidding of their Creator. Several different words are used for God's creative acts:

- God *made* (עשא) the firmament, heavenly bodies, sea animals and birds, land animals and man.
- God *separated* (בדל) light and darkness, the waters above and firmament below, the water and dry land.
- God *placed* (נתן) the heavenly bodies above the uninhabited world, and man to rule over the inhabited world.
- God *created* (ברא) sea creatures, birds, man.

The way the verb ברא is variously rendered in the Septuagint shows that the translators did not know the popularly alleged distinction.

God is not the Creator of just three aspects of the universe. He is the Creator of the entire universe. The verb ברא serves to call attention to His marvelous acts. Here is something that no man or other god could accomplish.

This belief in God as Creator was the essential feature of the Mosaic faith. God considered this aspect of Israel's faith so fundamental and important that when He chose a badge, a sign, a symbol for His theocratic nation to wear, He chose one that displayed Him as the Creator of the heaven and earth. In the fourth of the Ten Commandments God mandated that the people work six days and rest the seventh. He added that they were to do this because He had worked six days and rested on the seventh day.

This was the outward mark, the sign, symbolizing visibly that Israel was in covenant, in league, with God. According to Exodus 31:13, 17 the observance of the Sabbath was a sign between Israel and God. Just as the rainbow symbolized the Noahic Covenant, and circumcision symbolized the Abrahamic Covenant, and the cup
of wine symbolized the New Covenant, the observance of the Sabbath symbolized the Old Covenant.

By this ritual, Israel mirrored the Creator on earth and bore witness among the pagan nations that they were in covenant with the transcendent Creator. Here, indeed, was the essential difference in the two faiths. The pagans manipulated their nature deities by their magical words and mimetic ritual of the creation myth. But Israel showed by the mimetic ritual of working six days and resting the seventh day that they were under the Word, the Law, of the Creator, the One who brought the universe into existence by His command. This was the Creator's pattern in the beginning. Genesis 1, then, served as the libretto for Israel's life.

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. What, then, can be said about them?

First, it can be said that the Book of Genesis does not inform us concerning the origin of that which is contrary to the nature of God, neither in the cosmos nor in the world of the spirit. Where did the opposite of Him that is good and bright originate? Suddenly, without explanation, in Genesis 3 an utterly evil, brilliant, intelligent personality appears in the Garden of Eden masquerading as a serpent. The principle of origins, so strong in our minds, demands an explanation. But the truth is that the Book mocks us. The Bible provides no information regarding that which is dark and devoid of form. Here are some of the secret things that belong to God.

Second, the situation described in verse 2 was not outside the control of God, for the circumstantial clause adds, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The verb רוח הוהי translated "moved upon" occurs elsewhere only in Deuteronomy 32:11 of a מְסָר, either an eagle or a vulture, fluttering over her young in her nest as she cares for them. Although some would translate מְסָר here by the words "mighty wind," this is unlikely because everywhere else in this text אלוהים designates God, and the verb רוח implies intelligent concern. Here is no restrainer as in the ancient Near Eastern myth, hindering the Creator, but here is the creative, life-giving Spirit of God waiting the proper moment to begin history by the creation of heaven and earth through the Word. Though not called "good" at first, the darkness and deep were called

"good" later when they became part of the cosmos. It is all part of God's plan. According to His own sovereign purposes, however, in due time He has said that He will eliminate the darkness and deep from His organized universe altogether.

The biblicist faces a dilemma when considering the origin of those things which are contrary to God. A good God characterized by light could not, in consistency with His nature, create evil, disorder, and darkness. On the other hand, it cannot be eternally outside of Him for that would limit His sovereignty. The Bible resolves the problem not by explaining its origin but by assuring man that it was under the dominion of the Spirit of God.

GOD AS THE SAVIOR

The narrative of Genesis one served as the libretto for all of Israel's life. Reflection on this libretto for life not only reminded Israel that her God who called her to be His instrument for the salvation of the world was the Creator transcendent above and not immanent in the creation, but also that this same God was Himself a triumphant Savior.

In this series it has been pointed out that the chaos spoken of in Genesis 1:2 was not some living force or principle that could oppose God. But it has also been stated that a hostile dragon symbolized that state of darkness and sea at the time of creation. How can these two viewpoints be reconciled, or are they contradictory, as McKenzie maintained? It seems that both viewpoints are true: on the one hand, the deep and darkness had no life, but on the other hand, they represented a state of existence contrary to the character of God. According to Ramm, verse 2 represents the creation as a block of marble waiting the sculptor's creative touch, and according to Cassuto, it is like the raw clay on a potter's wheel waiting to be fashioned. To many theologians the state of verse 2 should be evaluated as "good." But this evaluation is inconsistent with the biblical viewpoint. The poets of Israel likened it to a monster. The remains of that state are still seen in the surging seas threatening life. The situation of verse 2 is not called good. Moreover, that state of darkness, confusion, and lifelessness is contrary to the nature of God.

in whom there is no darkness. He is called the God of light and life, the God of order.

As Israel reflected on this account of creation, then, it may be concluded that she was reminded that her God was a triumphant Savior, who overcame all that was contrary to His character. To Moses and his followers this fact brought assurance that the victory belonged to God.

But how different was Israel's battle to that of her pagan neighbors. Whereas her neighbors were involved in the battle of overcoming the hostile forces of nature, the gods of inertia, Israel was involved in the political-spiritual battle of overcoming a world hostile and in rebellion to the righteous character of God. The restrainer for Israel was not some cosmic dragon, but the Pharaoh, and the kings of the earth, who agitated like a surging sea against the rule of God. As Marduk overcame Tiamat, so Yahweh overcame Rahab, the Pharaoh, and so Yahweh would overcome His enemies including even Satan himself.

In fact, in contrast to the pagan celebrations reenacting an annual victory over the hostile forces of nature, all of Israel's celebrations commemorated God's victories in history in His ongoing program of establishing His righteous rule on earth. At the Passover ritual Israel celebrated the deliverance from the oppressive Pharaoh; at the Feast of Firstfruits she celebrated the victory of taking the land from the resisting Canaanites; and at the Feast of Tabernacles Israel anticipated the ultimate establishment of God's universal rule over the world which He had created in the first place.35

GOD AS THE RULER

In the "creation myths" of the pagans, the god responsible for the creation emerged as the ruler after his victory. So also God's story about creation revealed that He is the supreme ruler, sovereignly exercising His lordship in and over all the creation.

The narrative of Genesis 1 includes several indications of God's absolute lordship. The essence of the creative process is the will of God expressed through His word. A basic pattern runs through each creative act. Westermann analyzed that common pattern as follows:36

35 Terry Hulbert, "Eschatological Significance of Israel's Annual Feasts" (Th.D. disc., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1965), p. 95.
Announcement: And God said . . .
Command: "let there be . . . let it be gathered . . .
       let it bring forth ..."
Report: And it was so
Evaluation: And God saw that it was good.
Temporal framework: And there was evening, and there
               was morning, the ... day.

This analysis readily exposes the fact that the essential feature
of the creative process was the command of God. Westermann
observed: "These five elements are but parts of one coherent whole:
a command. The whole creation came into existence because God
willed it, God commanded it."37 Von Rad observed: "The world and
its fulness do not find their unity and inner coherence in a cosmo-
logical first principle, such as the Ionian natural philosophers tried
to discover but in the completely personal will of Yahweh their
creator."38

Moreover, to show His sovereign dominion over His creation,
God gave names to the light, to the darkness, to the firmament, to
the dry land, and to the gathered waters. He called them Day, Night,
Heavens, Earth, and Sea, respectively. To understand the significance
of this act of naming the parts of the creation it must be realized
that in the Semitic world the naming of something or someone was
the token of lordship. Reuben, for example, changed the names of
the cities of the Amorites after he had conquered them (Num.
32:38). Likewise, Pharaoh Necho changed Eliakim's name to
Jehoiakim after he had defeated the Judean king (2 Kings 23:34).
Is it not significant that God gave names precisely to those features
that belonged to the precreated situation? In so doing He showed that
He was Lord of all.

He left it to man to decide the names of the birds and of the
domesticated and wild animals. He did not name these because He
had delegated His authority to man to have dominion over the earth.
Thus by naming the creatures of the earth man brought them under
his dominion. Significantly, before God gave Adam His most precious
gift, the woman, God had man first show his ability to rule by naming
the other creatures. But, then, in one of the most instructive insights
into the mind of man before the fall, Adam named her after himself
(Gen. 2:23). He was מַעְלָה; she would be נַעֲלָה, the feminine form
of מַעְלָה. In this way Adam was saying, "She is my equal." He was

37 Ibid.
her lord, but he recognized her as his equal. What a perfect blending of leadership and love in the first husband.

God, who is Ruler of all, then delegated His authority to others. To the sun and the moon He gave the rule over the day and the night (Gen. 1:16), but to man He gave the rule over the earth (1:26). Does man want to know what it means to rule the earth? Then let him look to the sun and the moon as his example in the heavens. There he can see excellence, beauty, faithfulness and dependability, as these creatures fulfill and actualize their Creator's intent.

What an example and what an encouragement this creation narrative must have been to Israel, called on to bring the earth under His righteous rule. As they reflected on God's creative acts, they were reminded that they were called on to rule under and with the Ruler par excellence (Deut. 20:10-18). If they would be obedient to His word, they too would create a society in which righteousness and peace would kiss each other.

And what an encouragement that they would ultimately succeed! The Creator did not leave His job half finished. He perfected the creation, and then He established it. He did not end up with chaos, as Isaiah noted (Isa. 45:18). Neither would He forget His people. The program He began with He would consummate in triumphant rest.

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The Creation Account  
in Genesis 1:1-3  
Part V: The Theology of Genesis 1--Continued

Bruce K. Waltke

The preceding article in this series discussed some of the activities of God revealed in the creation account in Genesis 1.¹ This present article continues the discussion of the theology of Genesis 1 and then considers the relationship of other Old Testament creation passages to the interpretation of Genesis 1 suggested in this series.

GOD’S DIVINE ATTRIBUTES SEEN IN GENESIS 1

Genesis 1 revealed to Israel the activities of God as Creator, Savior, and Ruler. But it also revealed something of His attributes, including His greatness, wisdom, and goodness.

HIS GREATNESS

What splendid power and greatness God displayed by His creation. The Creator is a fortiori greater than His creation. Isaiah declared that Israel's God holds in the hollow of one hand all the water of the sea, and with the outstretched fingers of His other hand measures the expanse of the sky. Isaiah then added that God could take all the dust of the earth and pour it into His little basket and weigh all the mountains of the earth on His scales (Isa. 40:12).


EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the final installment in a series of five articles first delivered by the author as the Bueermann-Champion Foundation Lectures at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, Oregon, October 1-4, 1974, and adapted from I(Portland, OR: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974).
If God was great to Israel which had a limited view of the universe, how much greater He ought to be to modern man. Today we know that our galaxy is spinning like a gigantic pinwheel extending for 104,000 light-years from one end to the other. Our sun is 25,000 light-years from the center of this gigantic spiral and rotates around its center once every one million years. Above and below the spiral of our galaxy are about one hundred clusters of stars with one million stars in each cluster, and some of them have a diameter of 16 million miles. And to think we are but part of one of thousands of galaxies! Certainly God's vast creation reveals something of His own greatness.

HIS WISDOM

In the creation God's wisdom is displayed. He achieved the cosmos by first establishing the separation of the supportive systems necessary for life and man's existence, and by then filling these with moving and living creatures. On the first three days He overcame the lack of form, the \( \text{Uht} \), and on the next three days, and parallel to them, He overcame the emptiness of space, perhaps the \( \text{Uhb} \). The following well-known model of creation illustrates this creative work.\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Luminaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sky</td>
<td>Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Beasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instead of having been produced by gods locked in deadly conflict, the universe is the beautiful and orderly product of the one wise, creative Mind. On the first day temporal separation was achieved by the separation of light from darkness. On the second and third days spatial separation was achieved. The sky was separated from the water on the second day, but no pronouncement of good was given because spatial separation was not yet complete. Only with the separation of land, the third life supportive system, did God pronounce the spatial separation as good or complete. The parallelism of the last three days with the first three is

apparent. Whereas on the first day there was light, on the fourth day the light was localized into luminaries; whereas on the second day the water and sky were separated, on the fifth day the fish were created to fill the seas and the birds to fill the skies; whereas land and vegetation were created on the third day, on the sixth day the land animals and man were formed to live on the land and to be sustained by its vegetation.

Unlike Marduk who needed the wisdom of his father Ea in order to effect the creation, Yahweh acted alone in His sublime intelligence. Isaiah inferred this contrast when he asked:

Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or as His counselor has informed Him?
With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding?
And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge,
And informed Him of the way of understanding?
(Isa. 40:13-14).

Isaiah's point, however, is not clear in this translation found in the New American Standard Version. The following translation by R. N. Whybray more accurately captures Isaiah's thought:

Who has understood the mind of Yahweh, or who was his counselor, who instructed him?
Whom did he consult for his guidance, and who taught him the way to achieve order, and showed him how to exercise creative skill?3

Four crucial differences separate the two translations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>NASB</th>
<th>Whybray</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>נקִּדְתָּה</td>
<td>directed</td>
<td>understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>רוח</td>
<td>Spirit</td>
<td>mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מְשַׁמֵּשׁ</td>
<td>justice</td>
<td>to achieve order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>תְבוֹונָה</td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>creative skill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The verb נקִּדְתָּה can be translated "directed" or "understood" (Ezek. 19:25, 29; 33:17-20; Prov. 16:2; 21:2; 24:12; 1 Sam. 2:3). The translation "understood" is preferred here to "directed" because

in verse 12 the same verb undoubtedly means "to measure." In fact, in verse 12 the NASB translated נְכוֹת "to measure." One would normally assume that the word would have the same meaning in the next verse. Moreover, the notion of "measure" fits this passage better. Isaiah is asking, "Who has measured the mind of Yahweh?" i.e., "Who has comprehended it?" or as the Septuagint correctly interpreted it, τίς ἐγνώ νοῦν κυρίου: "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" In another connection Paul asked that same question: "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" (1 Cor. 2:16).

As to the second difference, Whybrey follows the Septuagint translation of "mind" rather than the more normal rendering "spirit" for the word נִזְר. In deciding this issue it should be noted first that נזאר can mean "mind." In Ezekiel 20:32 it is in the נזר that a thought or plan is formed. Similarly 1 Chronicles 28:12 refers to the plan which David "had in mind" to build the temple of Yahweh. Second, it should be noted that the principal verbs in these verses are ידָד ("to know") (40:13, 14b), יָבִּינ ("to understand") (40:14a), וֹלִם ("to train"). The emphasis in these verbs is on "knowing," "understanding," "thinking." Therefore, the Septuagint once again, followed by Paul, has probably given us the true sense by opting for "mind" rather than "spirit."

A third difference between Whybrey and the NASB is in the rendering of מָשָׁפַת. The basic meaning of this word is "to establish the heavenly norm or pattern on earth." Normally this concept is applied to society, i.e., the bringing of society into the right order or arrangement. In this sense it is translated "justice." But in three passages its meaning is applied to a building. In Exodus 26:30; 1 Kings 6:38; and Ezekiel 42:11 this word is used in reference to the design of the tabernacle, the temple of Solomon, and the future temple prophesied by Ezekiel, respectively. Significantly, in all these passages it refers to the design or arrangement of God's dwelling place. Once again, Whybrey has opted for the better sense, though unquestionably it is the more unusual one, for in this passage Isaiah is speaking of God as the Creator, the Designer of the world. For example, in verse 12 he speaks of God holding the whole creation in His hands; in verse 22 he says that God has stretched out the heavens like a curtain; and in verse 26 he says that Yahweh created the stars. The notion of social justice does not fit the context, but the unusual notion of constructing a building according to a design fits easily. Isaiah is asking in effect, "under whom did God serve as an apprentice to learn how to fashion this building, this temple, if you please,
namely the cosmos?" In effect, the earth is God's temple where He can fellowship with man.

Regarding the fourth difference, "תונובות" can be used of those who have technical skill in constructing God's buildings. It is used of Bezaleel who had responsibility for the artistic designs of the implements of the tabernacle (Exod. 31:3; 35:1); it is used of Oholiab and every skillful person engaged in the tabernacle (Exod. 36:1); and it is used of Hiram who built Solomon's temple. This sense parallels precisely the suggested sense for "משמש". Isaiah spoke of God's skill in building His temple, the cosmos.

It is concluded, therefore, that the intent of Isaiah's questions is to show that God acted alone in the designing and fashioning of this cosmos, His temple.

Whybray has pointed out that in this passage we have another polemic against the Babylonian creation myth. According to the Enuma Elish, Marduk, the storm god who was credited with the creation, was counseled by his father Ea, the god of wisdom. Whybray noted:

One of the most striking features of this poem is the role of Ea, the father of Marduk. In several respects his influence outweighs that of Marduk, in spite of the latter's frequently proclaimed kingship. It is Ea "the all wise" (1:60) who devises and executes the scheme for slaying Apsu, "the begetter of the gods," and who renders powerless his adviser and vizier, Mummu; and it is he who begets Marduk. When Anshar, the president of the assembly, proposes that Marduk, as a young and vigorous god, should be chosen to avenge the gods against Tiamat, it is again Ea who gives advice to Marduk before the interview (II: 96ff.). 4

But in Yahweh's court there is none who can measure the extent of His mind and serve as His counselor. By Himself and in His supreme intelligence God fashioned the harmonious symbiotic cosmos. In the light of this expression we can better understand what we are in Christ: "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16).

HIS GOODNESS

The narrative recorded in Genesis 1 also taught God's people the Creator's goodness. All that He made He called good; but more than that, He gave it all to man as a gift. All was under the dominion of Yahweh and He in turn had committed the dominion of the earth to man. Here indeed was a benevolent Despot.

4 Ibid., p. 76.
The separation of the elements into their life supportive systems enabled man to live. The heavenly bodies not only served as an example of rulership but also served to enable man to observe the seasons and times as he took part in the historical process, in which sphere the Creator was pleased to display His other sublime moral attributes of justice, righteousness, grace, and truth. The animals were under man's sway, and the herbs, vegetation, and fruit provided for his physical needs. It was not good that man should be alone, and so God made him a counterpart equal with himself.

Moreover, whereas everything else was created remotely from God, man came directly from the heart, hand, and nostrils of God. The vegetation sprang from the earth, the sea creatures originated out of the sea, and the beasts likewise trace their origin back to the earth. All these were created through the mediacy of other agents. But not man. At the chronological pyramid of creation stands man, and nothing stands between him and God. He originated from the hand and breath of God. The Creator resolved in His heart to make him: "Let us make man in our own image and our likeness" (Gen. 1:26). Here then is God's counterpart; not His equal, but one sharing His nature and dominion. Man too is crowned with glory and honor, as the psalmist stated (Ps. 8). As God is a plurality so also is man a plurality. "Let us," said the Creator and He made "them." Both are a plural unity. On him the Creator pronounced His effective word of blessing. The same word that brought the heavens and the earth into existence placed His word of blessing on the head of man: "Be fruitful and multiply." Surely Israel must have had a good self-image that psychological necessity for mental health. Then the Creator gave man, His image, the Sabbath rest.

How different all this was from the Israelites' pagan neighbors. The scriptural story is a breath of fresh air in a stagnant room; it is light in the midst of darkness. According to Tablet VI of *Enuma elish*, man was created from the blood of Kingu, a rebel deity, and for the purpose of doing the work of the gods. The text reads:

> They bound him Kingu] holding him before Ea,
> They imposed on him guilt and severed his blood (vessels).
> Out of his blood they fashioned mankind:
> He [Ea] imposed the service and let free the gods.
> After Ea, the wise, had created mankind,
> Had imposed upon it the service of the gods
> That work was beyond comprehension ....

The creation myth, then, underscored in the minds of its celebrants that they were slaves. Sarna observed, "The position and function of man in the scheme of creation paralleled precisely the status of the slaves in Mesopotamia."

Moreover, one should note the contrast in viewpoints toward the seventh day. In contrast to the blessed nature and refreshment of Israel's Sabbath, the seventh day in Mesopotamia was a day of bad luck. Those pagans feared that their work would not prosper on the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the month, days which were connected with the four phases of the moon. Concerning these days Cassuto wrote: "These days, to which must be added the nineteenth of the month, which occurs seven weeks after the beginning of the preceding month, were regarded as unlucky days on which a man should afflict himself, eschew pleasures, and refrain from performing important work, for they would not prosper."

It is against this environment and background that one can appreciate the Bible and the God of grace who revealed His benevolent virtues to man.

OTHER CREATION PASSAGES

Having considered the basic text bearing on creation and chaos and its theological implications, the writer now turns to other texts of the Old Testament to test and to clarify his conclusions about creation and chaos. Most writers regard the divergent texts about creation as contradictory and make no attempt to harmonize them. But this skepticism is unworthy of a book that bears the earmarks of an Author in whom there is no confusion.

PSALM 104

An analysis of Psalm 104 reveals that the author celebrates the works of God essentially according to the six creative days of Genesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Ps. 104</th>
<th>Gen. 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;covering yourself with light&quot;</td>
<td>2a</td>
<td>3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>&quot;stretching out the heaven&quot;</td>
<td>2b-4</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is apparent that the poet-psalmist has signaled out the sea and its creature, leviathan, for special emphasis by placing the creation of the fifth day after the sixth. In the light of the pagan myths it is quite clear that his intentions are polemical. Whereas in the pagan creation myths the sea and its monster were dreaded manifestations of the hostile cosmic forces, the inspired poet climactically declared that these, too, are the work of God.

But the crucial verse in this discussion is verse 6. Here it is stated that in the creation God covered the earth with the מים ("the deep") as with a garment. At first glance this seems to contradict this writer's analysis of Genesis 1:2, for it seems to say that God created the deep referred to there. Psalm 104:6 reads: "Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters were standing above the mountains." The waters referred to here, however, are not the flood mentioned in Genesis 1:2, but the flood mentioned in connection with Noah, recorded in Genesis 6:9. Several reasons are suggested in support of this view:

First, though the psalm is structured after Genesis 1, it is not a cosmogony. It is a description of the earth as it is now. The perspective is not that of the origin of creation, but of a man living after the events of the early chapters of Genesis. For example, the psalmist speaks of the cultivated grains: "He causes the grass to grow for the (domesticated cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he might bring forth bread from the earth" (v. 14). According to Genesis 2:6 and 3:17-18, however, cultivated grains and the bread from them did not originate until after the Fall of man. Moreover, the psalmist speaks in verse 13 of God watering

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the mountains from His upper chambers--again a situation that did not prevail until after the Fall of man, according to Genesis 2:5-6. Then, too, he speaks of God's creatures dying and returning to the dust: "You hide your face and they are dismayed; You take away your spirit and they expire and return to the dust" (v. 29). On the other hand, he insists that creation continues now. Verse 30 reads: "You send forth Your spirit and they are created; and You renew the face of the ground." The psalmist, then, is not giving a cosmogony, but a description of creation as it is now.

Second, the psalmist states that this flood will never again cover the earth. "You set a boundary that they [the flood waters of v. 6] may not pass over; that they may never again cover the earth" (v. 9). How could he have the flood of Genesis 1:2 in mind when later in the time of Noah, God once again unleashed the destructive sea and once again covered the earth? Surely, the psalmist must have had in mind the deluge at the time of Noah, for it was only after this flood that God promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood (Gen. 9:11).

Third, the terminology of Psalm 104:6 is precisely the same as that used in connection with the flood in Genesis 7:19: "And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered." This view agrees with Morris and Whitcomb, who interpret verse 6 in connection with the Noahic flood.9

Fourth, it is significant to note that the psalmist begins creation with light, not with an earth devoid of form and covered with darkness. This psalm, then, does not differ from the proposed exegesis of Genesis 1.

But the point of the psalm should not be missed. The purpose of creation is doxological: "Bless the LORD, oh my soul! Oh LORD my God, Thou art very great" (v. 1).

JOB 38:4-11

This passage may be divided into two equal parts, with four lines in each stanza: the creation of the earth (vv. 4-7), and the creation of the sea (vv. 8-11).

The issue here is whether this poem can be harmonized better with the state described in Genesis 1:2 or with the creation of the dry land and sea on the third day as described in Genesis 1:9-10.

To put it another way, is the earth referred to in Job 38:4 the unformed earth or the dry land separated from the sea? The key to the correct harmonization of Job 38:4-7 with Genesis I is found in the metaphorical word תַּמָּשׁ "to found," "to establish" (v. 4). In this highly evocative poem God is likened to a builder, an architect, constructing His magnum opus. He begins by preparing its footings and finally finishes the foundation by laying the chief cornerstone. It seems impossible to harmonize this imagery with the זבוב זחל of Genesis 1:2, which means precisely the opposite. In Isaiah 34:11 the metaphor of building was used but with the opposite intent. Instead of using the line and plummet for erecting the house, God was there using them to dismantle the house. After He had dismantled it He ended with זבוב זחל, which means "not built." How, then, could Job's imagery of building refer to the unformed state of Genesis 1:2? The notions are contradictory. On the other hand, there is nothing inconsistent here with applying the metaphor to the triumphant command, "Then God said, Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear" (Gen. 1:9).

This harmonization is further confirmed by the description of the seas. The poet does not have in mind the formation of a deep which covered the unformed earth as depicted in Genesis 1:2. He means precisely the opposite. He has in view a sea under very restricted limits. Using the figure known as hypocastasis, God asks, "Who enclosed the sea with doors?" (v. 8), and then He continued, "I placed boundaries on it, and I set a bolt and doors, and I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here shall your proud ways stop' " (vv. 10-11). This imagery can only be harmonized with the command in Genesis 1:9, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place." The mention of darkness with the sea (which might cause one at first to think of the unformed state in Genesis 1:2) must be associated from the context with the darkness under God's creative design after the first day.

As the Creator calmed the turbulent sea, so this revelation from God quieted the tempestuous spirit of Job.

PROVERBS 8:22-31

By means of soliloquy the wisdom poet seeks to show the primacy of wisdom. In the poem, wisdom claims to have existed prior to and at the time of God's first created acts. The issue is, What does wisdom include among God's creative acts? By implication the
"depths and springs" mentioned in verse 24 are included among God's creative acts.

Many commentators assume that the "depths" spoken of in verse 24 refer to the מים mentioned in Genesis 1:2. If this is so, then wisdom is including the state mentioned in Genesis 1:2 as among God's creative acts, and the present writer's analysis of Genesis 1:1-3 must be wrong. On the other hand, it should be noted that מים is used over thirty times in the Old Testament to designate the oceans which came into existence on the second and third days as part of God's creative process in separating out the spatial elements of the cosmos. Indeed, the mention of "deeps" as plural in the passages favors this latter interpretation, for the "oceans" formed on these days are mentioned frequently in the plural.

An analysis of the structure of the Proverbs passage will confirm the thesis that the "depths" should be understood as those formed on the second and third days, and not the depths covering the unformed earth mentioned in Genesis 1:2.

Gemser noted the formal resemblance of verses 22 to 31 with the Egyptian and Babylonian hymns of creation.10 That is helpful, but even more helpful is the realization that the structure is precisely like that of Genesis 1:1-3,11 as seen in the following analysis:

I. Summary statement 8:22-23 (2 vv.)
The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From everlasting I was established from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth.

II. Circumstantial clauses 8:24-29 (6 vv.)
A. Negative situation: "when-not-yet" sea or land. 8:24-26 (3 vv.)
1. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.
2. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth;
3. While He had not yet made the earth and the fields, for the first dust of the world.

B. Positive situation: "When He made" heaven, sea, land.

8:27-29 (3 vv.)

1. When He established the heavens, I was there,
   when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep,
2. When He made firm the skies above,
   when the springs of the deep became fixed,
3. When He set for the sea its boundary,
   so that the water should not transgress His command,
   when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

III. Main clause: waw consecutive with prefixed conjugation form.

8:30-31 (2 vv.)

Then I was beside Him, as a master workman;
   and I was daily His delight,
   rejoicing always before Him,
Rejoicing in the world, His earth,
   and having my delight in the sons of men.

It is clear that in five of the six lines of the circumstantial clauses, wisdom has in mind the creative acts of the second and third days when God achieved the spatial separation of the universe. The positive circumstantial clauses (vv. 27-29) speak of the separation of the heavens from the springs of the deep and of the separation of the earth from the sea. Here too is further confirmation that the analysis of Job 38:4 is correct because the same imagery of a builder laying a foundation is used, and here it is clearly in connection with the separation of the waters from the dry land.

Moreover, it is also certain that in the negative circumstantial clauses of verses 25 and 26 the poet, characterizing the earth by mountains and hills, fields and dust, obviously does not have in mind an earth unformed and unfilled. So then the earth in view is the earth that appeared on the third day of creation. If five of the six lines clearly speak of the creation that occurred on the second and third days, and the one remaining line (v. 24) can refer to that time, is it not probable that this is actually the case? Should not an ambiguous line be interpreted by the unambiguous ones? In a word, nothing in the context suggests that the poet has in mind the state described in Genesis 1:2. It is therefore concluded that Proverbs 8:24 is best harmonized with the creation of the sea on the second and third days.
Once again the text can be harmonized, and it need not be concluded that the scriptural accounts of creation are incompatible with one another.

ISAIAH 45:7

This is the only verse in Scripture which states that God created darkness. He is said to be "the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity." How can this statement be harmonized with the view that in Genesis 1 God did not create the darkness? Two answers may be given in response to this question. Since God incorporated the darkness as part of His creation (in order to provide temporary separation), He may well have had in view this act of the first day. In this sense one can say that God formed the light and even created the darkness. This writer, however, prefers a different solution—an answer that views this verse in its larger context as part of the conclusion to the Cyrus oracle in Isaiah 44:24-45:4. In 44:24-28 God calls Cyrus His shepherd who would release His people from the restraint of the Babylonian captivity and in 45:1-4, He calls Cyrus His Messiah ("anointed") who would smash Israel's oppressors. On the one hand, then, Yahweh's servant brings peace for God's people; and on the other hand, Cyrus brings destruction on Israel's enemies. Cyrus is the author of both peace and calamity; or to use metaphorical terms, he is the author of both light and darkness. But the one who called Cyrus to his twofold task is none other than Yahweh, the Author of both.

CONCLUSION

The creation account of the Old Testament finds its full explanation in Jesus of Nazareth, the God-man. As God, He is the Creator, the One full of light, life, wisdom, and goodness. As man, He is the One who is bringing the earth under His dominion. The earth that the first Adam lost to Satan through his disobedience to the command of God is being reclaimed by the Second Adam through His obedience to the Cross. He is presently winning it back by His spiritual victories in the lives of men and He will finally put all things under His feet at the Second Advent.

John wrote about Him as the Creator: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that
has come into being. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:1-5).

Paul also wrote about Christ as the Creator: "For Him all things were created, both in the heavens, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Col. 1:16-17).

And the writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke of Him as the man who will bring all things under His dominion: "He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere, saying, ‘What is man, that Thou rememberest him? Or the son of man, that Thou art concerned about him? Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, and hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him" (Heb. 2:5-8).

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CAIN AND HIS OFFERING

BRUCE K. WALTKE

Introduction

Partially because of the laconic style in which the Cain and Abel story is told and partially because of prejudgments, scholars are divided in their opinions why God rejected Cain's offering. This essay aims to answer that question.

Prejudging that our story reflects the development of Israelite religion, Skinner proposed that the story represents an early stage of Israelite religion in which animal sacrifice alone was acceptable to Yahweh. He explained: "It is quite conceivable that in the early days of the settlement in Canaan the view was maintained among the Israelites that the animal offerings of their nomadic religion were superior to the vegetable offerings made to the Canaanite Baals." Disregarding the unity of Genesis and ignoring God's mandate that Adam, the representative man, till the ground (2:5; 3:23), Gunkel claimed: "This myth indicates that God loves the shepherd and the offering of flesh, but as far as the farmer and the fruits of the field are concerned, He will have none of them." Cassuto, by contrast, perceptively compared this story with the Creation story and the Garden of Eden story.

There is a kind of parallel here to what was stated in the previous chapters: the raising of sheep corresponds to the dominion over the living creatures referred to in the story of Creation (i 26, 28), and the tilling of the ground

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1 For an excellent commentary on the Cain and Abel story see "Cain and Abel" in The New Media Bible Times 1/3 (published by the Genesis Project, 1976).

2 For the function of offerings see Claus Westermann, Genesis (BKAT 1; 3 vols.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974-82) 1.401f.


4 Hermann Gunkel, Genesis ubersetzt and erklart (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1922) 43.
is analogous to what we are told at the beginning and the end of the story of the Garden of Eden (ii 5, iii 23).  

Some orthodox commentators, coming to the text with the pre-judgment that fallen man may approach offended God only through blood, think that God rejected Cain's sacrifice because it was bloodless. Candlish, for example, wrote: "To appear before God, with whatever gifts, without atoning blood, as Cain did--was infidelity."  

This writer comes to the text with the prejudices that the storyteller drops clues in his text demanding the audience's close attention to details in the text, Gen 4:1-16. Leupold underscored that in the lapidary style of Scripture "significant individual instances are made to display graphically what course was being pursued."  

The second presupposition entails that the interpreter also listen to the rest of Scripture in order to determine the text's meaning and/or to validate his interpretation of the narrative. Although the Cain and Abel story probably enjoyed preliterary independence, it must now be read as part of the Pentateuch. Skinner rightly noted that the exegete must pay attention to the audience to whom a story is addressed. Unfortunately, he reconstructed the wrong audience! Shackled by his presuppositions of source criticism and lacking the modern tools of literary criticism (sometimes called "rhetorical criticism"), he interpreted the story in the light of hypothetical "first hearers" instead of the readers of the Pentateuch to whom the text in hand was addressed. (Prior to and/or apart from the modern emphasis to hear a text wholistically, studies by William Henry Green, H. Segal, and D. J. A. Clines, each in his own way, put the unity of the Pentateuch beyond doubt.)

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8 Bruce K. Waltke, "Is It Right to Read the New Testament into the Old?" *Christianity Today* 27/13 (September 2, 1983) 77.  
We commence our study with the observation that the text syntactically distinguishes between the offerer and his offering: "The LORD looked with favor on ['el] Abel and on ['el] his offering, but on ['e1] Cain and on ['el] his offering he did not look with favor" (Gen 4:4b-5a).

I. Cain's Offering

1. Offerings in the Pentateuch.

The Torah, especially the priestly legislation (the so-called "P document"), has a rich and precise vocabulary to represent the sacraments offered to the LORD on an altar; each term denotes a physical object representing a spiritual truth upon which the worshipper could feed spiritually in his approach to and communion with God.\(^{13}\)

The most inclusive term for presentations to God on the altar is *qorban*, "offering," from a root signifying "to bring near." This term is not used in the Cain and Abel story.

Offerings can be analyzed broadly into two classes: voluntary and involuntary. Involuntary offerings include the "sin offering" (*hatta't*) and the "guilt offering" (*'asam*).*\(^{14}\) These sacrifices make "atonement" (*kpr*)\(^{15}\) and involved shedding blood for removal of sin. Were Cain presenting an involuntary offering, he would have been rejected for failure to offer blood. In fact, however, in the Cain and Abel story, a part of the Books of Moses, neither "sin offering" nor "guilt offering" is used.


\(^{14}\) Jacob Milgrom, Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976). Other involuntary presentations include the substitute animal for the first born (Exod 34:19-20), the ritual for cleansing from leprosy (Leviticus 14), and defilement by contact with a carcass (Numbers 19).

The voluntary offerings included the "burnt offering" (‘ola), "meal offering" (minha), and "fellowship offering" (selem), including "acknowledgement offering" (toda), "votive offering" (neder), and "free-will offering" (nedab). These dedicatory offerings could be either animal, as in the case of the burnt-offering (Leviticus 1), or grain, as in the case of the "meal offering" (Leviticus 2). The fellowship offering could be either (Leviticus 3). A libation offering (nesek) accompanied burnt and fellowship offerings. The priest's portion of the fellowship offering was symbolically "waved" before the LORD as his portion and called the "wave offering" (Tenupa). Certain portions of it (namely, one of the cakes and the right thigh) were given as a "contribution" from the offerer to the priests, the so-called "heave offering" (teruma).

The term "sacrifice" (zebah) may be a generic term for presentations on the altar (mizbeah) or a more technical term for representing rituals in making a covenant. The slaughtering of an animal in the latter case symbolized a self-curse (that is, the one making covenant would say words to the effect, "may it happen to me as it is happening to this animal I am killing") and effected a sacrifice.16 We need not pursue the word further because it is not used in Genesis 4.

Our narrator designates three times (vv 3, 4, 5) the brothers' offerings by minha, a grain offering, it will be recalled, in the so-called "P document." The unusual element in the story from a lexical viewpoint is not that Cain's offering is bloodless but that Abel's is bloody! In any case, by using minha, Moses virtually excludes the possibility that God did not look on Cain's offering because it was bloodless. Rothkoff said:

The terminology used with regard to the patriarchal age is that of the Torah as a whole; it is unlikely that the same words in Genesis mean something different in the other Books of Moses. Thus, Cain and Abel each brought a "gift" (minhah; Gen. 4:4f.), which was usually of a cereal nature as brought by Cain (Lev. 2, et al.) but could also refer to an animal offering (I Sam. 2:17; 26:19). Noah offered up a burnt offering (‘olah; Gen. 8:20ff.) and the pleasing odor of the sacrifice is stressed.17

He could have added that Noah in conformity with the later priestly and deuteronomistic legislation distinguished between "clean and

unclean' animals (Gen 7:2, the so-called ‘J document’! cf. Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14).

2. The Meaning of minha outside the Pentateuch

Most scholars trace minha back to an Arabic root meaning "to lend someone something" for a period of time so that the borrower can have free use of the loan. In Hebrew, however, the idea of loaning is lost, and it comes to mean "gift," "tribute."

In nontheological texts it designates a "gift" from an inferior to a superior person, particularly from a subject to a king, to convey the idea of homage. The Israelites, for example, who despised Saul "brought him no present" (minha) (1 Sam 10:27), that is, as Carr explained: "did not acknowledge the new king." The kings submissive to Solomon brought "tribute" (minha) (1 Kgs 4:21 [Heb. 5:1]; cf. Jdg 3:15-18; 2 Sam 8:2, 6). "Gifts" to Solomon included articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules (1 Kgs 10:25).

A person brought a gift appropriate to his social standing and vocation (cf. Gen 32:13ff. [Heb. vv 14ff]). Appropriately, Abel, a shepherd, brought some of his flock (that is, from the fruit of the womb of sheep and/or goats), and Cain, a farmer, brought from the fruit of the ground. Furthermore, would God reject the eldest son's tribute because it came from the ground that he himself had commanded Adam to work? If minha were translated by either "gift" or "tribute" in Gen 4:3-5, it would be clearer that the absence of blood from Cain's presentation on his altar did not disqualify him (cf. Deut 26:1-11).

The theological uses of minha comport with its nontheological uses (cf. Num 16:15; Jdg 6:18; 1 Sam 2:17; Ps 96:8; Zeph 3:10). Snaith said that minha could loosely be used in the sense of "gift" or "tribute" even in specific cultic contexts. Carr likewise observed: "Of particular interest in this connection is the distinction between zebah and minha in 1 Sam 2:29; 3:14; and Isa 19:21; between ‘ola and minha in Jer 14:12 and Ps 20:3 [H 4]; and between shelem and minha in Amos 5:22." Our lexical study for the term designating Cain's offering gives no basis for thinking it was rejected because it was bloodless. In fact,

18 Carr, "mnh," 514.
19 Ibid.
of the many expressions for presentations to God which were available to Moses, he could not have used a more misleading term if this were his intended meaning.

3. *Descriptions of the Offerings within the Text*

The storyteller intends to contrast Abel's offering with Cain's by paralleling "Cain brought some" with "Abel brought some," by adding with Abel, "even he" (gam hu') (v 4), and by juxtaposing in a chiastic construction the LORD's acceptance of Abel and his gift with his rejection of Cain and his gift (vv 4b-5a).

He characterizes Abel's offerings from the flocks as "from the firstborn" and "from their fat." By offering the firstborn Abel signified that he recognized God as the Author and Owner of Life. In common with the rest of the ancient Near East, the Hebrews believed that the deity, as lord of the manor, was entitled to the first share of all produce. The firstfruits of plant and the firstborn of animals and man were his. The LORD demonstrated that he gave Egypt its life and owned it by taking its firstborn. Israel's gifts from the animals involved those that open the womb (Exod 13:2, 12; 34:19) and gifts from the ground had to be the "firstfruits" (bikkurim) (Deut 26:1-11).

Abel's offering conformed with this theology; Cain's did not. In such a laconic story the interpreter may not ignore that whereas Abel's gift is qualified by "firstborn," the parallel "firstfruits" does not modify Cain's. Skinner cavalierly rewrote the story and misinterpreted the data thus: "Cain's offering is thus analogous to the first-fruits (bikkurim Ex 23:16, 19; 34:22, 26; Nu 13:20 etc.) of Heb ritual; and it is arbitrary to suppose that his fault lay in not selecting the best of what he had for God."²¹

Abel also offered the "fat," which in the so-called "P" material belonged to the LORD and was burned symbolically by the priests. This tastiest and best burning part of the offering represented the best. Abel's sacrifice, the interlocutor aims to say, passed that test with flying colors. Cain's sacrifice, however, lacks a parallel to "fat."

²⁰ Sometimes the principle of redemption by substitution came into play here. In the case of children, the LORD provided a substitute animal (cf. Gen 22:1-19; Exod 13:1-13; Dent 15:19), and the Levitical family was consecrated to God in place of the firstborn (Num 3:1-4; cf. Num 18:15-16).
²¹ Skinner, *Genesis*, 104; Gunkel, *Genesis*, 42 held the same view.
In this light Plaut's comment, "God's rejection of Cain's offering is inexplicable in human terms," appears obtuse.

Finally, is it not strange that if the narrator intended that Cain's sacrifice was disqualified for lack of blood that he does not mention blood with Abel's gift. Admittedly it is a negative clue, but when combined with the two positive clues, the mention of "firstborn" and "fat," it shouts out against Von Rad's baseless claim: "The only clue one can find in the narrative is that the sacrifice of blood was more pleasing to Yahweh."23

Rabbinic exegesis also picked up these clues ("two expressions to emphasize that the oblation was the best of its kind ..." without mentioning "blood") and then exaggerated them, maintaining that Cain brought produce of the poorest quality. We cannot agree with Westermann who negates these clues and draws the conclusion instead that the text merely speaks of God's immutability. He said:

Gott hat das Opfer des einen angesehen, das des anderen nicht. Das Gott das Opfer Kains nicht ansah, ist also weder auf seine Gesinnung noch auf ein falsches Opfer noch auf eine falsche Art des Opferns zurückzuführen. Es ist vielmehr das Unabänderliche damit ausgesagt, dass so etwas geschieht.25

Westermann's view represents God as capricious. Rather, Abel's sacrifice represents acceptable, heartfelt worship; Cain's represents unacceptable tokenism.

4. Witness of the NT

The writer of Hebrews says that by faith Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain did (Heb 11:4), a statement that tends to support the rabbinic interpretation. No text in the NT faults Cain for a bloodless sacrifice. To be sure Hebrews mentions "the blood of Abel," but he has in mind Abel's blood, not that of his sacrifice (Heb 12:24). Jesus' cleansing blood, he says, is better than Abel's blood because Abel's cried for vengeance, whereas the blood of Christ,

24 Cassuto, Genesis 1.205.
25 Westermann, Genesis, 403.
typified in God's sacrifice to clothe the nakedness of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21), cried out for forgiveness and provided salvation.

III. The Characterization of Cain

1. The Character of the Priest in the Pentateuch

   The unity of the Pentateuch also enables us to discover, interpret, and validate clues regarding the brothers as priests. Leviticus 8-9, 26 teaches that the priest's character qualified him or disqualified him from the altar. An encroacher, be he Israelite or non-Israelite, must be put to death. In this light, the statement in vv 4-5 that the LORD accepted one priest, Abel, and rejected the other, Cain, takes on new significance. Whereas the text explicitly characterizes Abel's offering, and more or less infers Cain's, it dwells on Cain's character, and more or less infers Abel's.

2. Cain's Characterization in the Text

   Robert Alter refined our interpretation of narrative by analyzing and classifying the following techniques used by a story-teller for communicating his meaning: statements by the narrator himself, by God, by heroes or heroines; by verbal clues; by juxtaposition of material; by characterization; and by consequences of actions. We employed the techniques of verbal clues and juxtaposition of material to discover the blemish in Cain's gift. The other techniques expose the deformity in his character.

   The LORD said he is unacceptable: "If you [Cain] do what is right, will you not be accepted?" (v 7). To this he added: "Sin is crouching at your door." After sin so dominated Cain that he killed Abel, the LORD cursed Cain even as he had earlier cursed his spiritual father, the Serpent: "You are under a curse" (v. 11; cf. 3:14).

   Note too how the narrator characterizes the sulking Cain as a sinner unworthy to worship. Cain's visible behavior confirms the LORD's privileged assessment of his heart. Cain's anger against God is written

large on his face (vv 5-6; contrast Hab 2:4), and he progresses in sin from deficient worship to fratricide (v 8).

_Cain's speech_, disclosing his unregenerate heart, condemns him. His sarcastic question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" betrays both his callousness against God and his hate of his brother made in God's image (v 9). He calls into question God's wisdom, justice, and love and attempts to justify himself, claiming: "My punishment is more that I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence" (vv 13-14). Even after God mitigates his sentence (v 15), he fails to respond to God's grace (v 16).

As a _consequence_ of his action Cain became a man without a place, an outcast from God's presence, from the ground, and from his fellow-man (vv 14-16).

3. _Witness of the NT_

The NT validates our conclusions drawn from the text. Jesus characterized Abel as righteous (Matt 23:35), and Hebrews added that Abel, in contrast to Cain, offered his gift in faith: "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings" (Heb 11:4). According to John, Cain belonged to the evil one and was himself evil: "Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous" (1 John 3:12). According to Jude, Cain spoke abusively and thought like an unreasoning animal: "Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; ... like unreasoning animals ... woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain" (Jude 11f.).

_Conclusion_

Although the narrative by repeating the preposition _'el_ with both the proper names, Abel and Cain, and with _minha_ syntactically distinguishes the brothers and their offerings, yet theologically, as suggested above, the two are inseparable. Elsewhere Yahweh rejected the gifts of Korah (Num 16:15), Saul's men (1 Sam 26:19), and apostate Israel (Isa 1:13), not because of some blemish in their offering, but because of their deformed characters. Cain's flawed character led to his feigned worship. Had his mind been enlightened
to understand his dependence upon the Creator, who fructified the ground, and the Redeemer, who atoned man's sin through Christ's blood, providing a basis for man's reconciliation to God, he would have offered not a token gift, but one from the heart, and along with Abel both he and his gift would have been pleasing to God.

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TERMINOLOGICAL PATTERNS AND GENESIS 38

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In recent studies a detailed analysis of the narrative outline of the Judah and Tamar episode has been presented. These analyses interpret Gen 38 as a literary whole possessing a distinct structural unity and design, a narrative in which the “analysis of structure or ‘form’ has brought to light the ‘content’”, and concerning the position of Gen 38 in the extant text and its linguistic and thematic interrelation with the Joseph story it has been concluded:

1 E. M. Menn proposes that "since the motifs of birth and naming appear earlier in the narrative as well (Gen 38:3-5), Genesis 38 may be viewed as a double tale of procreation, in which initial biological and social discontinuity is twice overcome, first in Gen 38:1-5 and next in Gen 38:6-30" (Judah and Tamar [Genesis 38] in Ancient Jewish Exegesis: Studies in Literary Form and Hermeneutics, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 51 [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997], 15). The second part of the narrative, vv. 6-30, is subdivided by her as follows: vv. 6-11; 12-19;20-23; 24-26; 27-30 (19-28). A. J. Lambe, considering Gen 38 "one of the best examples of... the Bible's 'smaller literary wholes,'" presents a different and somewhat chiastic outline consisting of "five phases of development" ("Genesis 38: Structure and Literary Design," in The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives, JSOTSup 257, ed. P. R. Davies and D. A. J. Clines [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], 102-120). The proposed five phases of this overarching structure are: (1) equilibrium (vv. 1-6), (2) descent (vv. 7-11), (3) disequilibrium (v. 12a), (4) ascent (vv. 12b-26), and (5) equilibrium (vv. 27-30) (103). Furthermore, he maintains that each of the five sections has been chiastically structured (109-119). It should be noticed, however, that the postulated chiasms are mainly based on conceptual and only partly on terminological considerations.

Judah's pivotal role in Gen 37-50 brings into question the appropriateness of the common designation of these chapters as the "Joseph Story." Although Joseph receives primary attention, Genesis 37-50 actually features two of Jacob's sons, Judah and Joseph, by describing the events of their lives after they part company with their brothers and by portraying their rise to positions of leadership, within the family and over Egypt, respectively. Perhaps Genesis 38, with its focus on Judah, appears intrusive at least in part because Gen 37-50 is generally viewed as Joseph's story. If one broadens one's understanding of the subject of these chapters to include events important for Israel's history, then Genesis 38 doesn't appear intrusive, but rather of paramount importance. 3

While E. M. Menn's results are in clear contrast to many studies scrutinizing the provenience and present position of Gen 38, 4 I not only agree with her conclusions, but I would even hypothesize: in the context of the Endgestalt, i.e., the final shape of the text of Genesis, that this narrative has been purposefully placed in its present position by the ancient author, the term "author" being used and understood as referring to the person(s) responsible for the present text, the person(s) who composed the literary unit we call, e.g., "Gen 38" or "Genesis," literary entities which did not exist prior to their being composed in their present compositional context, whatever the prehistory of the respective Vorlagen might have been.

In a recent study carefully and consistently following R. Rendtorff's hermeneutic principle that "the understanding of the biblical text in its present


form is the preeminent task of exegesis,"⁵ almost the total vocabulary of Leviticus has been scrutinized.⁶ This analysis shows that the present text present itself as a carefully composed literary entity. In the course of that study it has been shown that by tabulating the total vocabulary of a given passage, the distinct distribution, the relative frequency, and the structural positioning of significant terms and/or phrases come to light, and it is these structural elements which have been termed "terminological patterns."

Furthermore, it has become evident that these terminological patterns create short-range linkages in a self-contained textual unit, but at the same time long-range terminological patterns have been discovered. Because of the symbolic significance ascribed by the ancients to the number "seven" (representing completion and completeness), it has been maintained that "in a variable-length list often the seventh slot and, in case of a longer list, at times the twelfth position are emphasized by means of some special term/phrase."⁷

At this point, two examples taken from the aforementioned study should suffice. First, in Lev 11, which in Pentateuchal studies is often viewed as consisting of several distinct redactional layers, the hiphil participle of the verb עָלָה "go up"⁸ and the noun אָרֶץ "land"⁹ appear both for the seventh time in the unique statement: "כִּי יְהוָה אָרֶץ הָעָרָבָה לָאֵן מָאָרֶת מָאָרֶת "for I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (v. 45). Second, in a macrostructure, i.e., structural outline encompassing major parts of the book of Leviticus, an eleven-part terminological pattern based on the phrase ארץ המארת "the land of Egypt,"¹⁰ comes to light. Within this terminological pattern a carefully construed chiastic structure crops up, an outline with a singular seventh position (25:38), where a cluster of theological tenets can be detected which is unique in the Hebrew Bible. In my view it is noteworthy that in both examples the terminological patterns clearly cross the boundaries of "P" and "H" material, thereby calling into question the validity of these boundaries.

In the present bipartite study we shall begin by searching for short-range terminological patterns within the narrow confines of Gen 38, and it is only in a second step that long-range terminological linkages will be looked for, structures seemingly interlinking major parts of the present book of Genesis.

⁷ Ibid., 32.
⁸ Vv. 3, 42, 5, 6, 26, 45; cf. Warning, 52-53.
⁹ Vv. 2, 21, 29, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46; cf. Warning, 53-54.
The Verb נתן

The eight occurrences of the common verb נתן "give" (2011/150) in Gen 38 have probably been employed as a structural device in outlining the content of the narrative. Whereas the first and last occurrences of the verb have not been thematically integrated in the following structure, the other six members have been chiastically arranged, and in my opinion the close verbal and conceptual connection of the corresponding parts can hardly be contradicted. In v. 14 it is stated that "she had not been given to him as a wife," and correspondingly Judah admits in v. 26 that "I have not given her to my son Shela"; v. 16 makes mention of Tamar's question, "What will you give me, if you come into me" and v. 18b reports, "and he gave [them to] her and came into her"; v. 17 refers to her terms, "if you will give me a pledge until you send it" and v. 18a makes mention of Judah's answer, "What pledge shall I give you?"

The distinct terminological patterns presented in this table support the thematic coherence of the narrative, emphasizing the "not-giving" of Tamar as a wife for Shela and the bargaining about what to give/receive.

11 The numbers given in parentheses are to be understood in the following way: according to A. Even-Shoshan, ed., the verb occurs 2,011 times in the Hebrew Bible and 150 times in Genesis (A New Concordance of the Old Testament [Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1990]).
as a pledge prior to having sexual intercourse.

The Verb בָּא אֱלֹהִים

By means of intricately interrelating the six occurrences of the verb בָּא אֱלֹהִים ("come (into)"") (2,565/150) in each case denoting "to have intercourse with," with two of the five occurrences of the verb הָרָה "conceive, be pregnant" (54/22), an impressive inclusion has been created. The inclusio, being based both on terminological and thematic correspondence, is construed by the verbatim statement רָבָה אֱלֹהִים "and he came into her and she became pregnant" (vv. 3, 18). In a similar vein as in the preceding structure the thematic interrelation of statements made in vv. 8 and 9 and in v. 16a and b cannot be contradicted. "Go into your brother's wife" (v. 8) is matched by v. 9, "so whenever he went into his brother's wife," and Judah's request, "please let me come into you" (v. 16a), is countered by Tamar in v. 16b, "What will you give me to come into me?"

By way of deliberately distributing the two "procreative verbs" and הָרָה, the ancient author construes two portentous sexual encounters in Judah's life into a fine inclusion, thus encompassing a major part of Gen 38. Whereas the first one turns out to be a failure, at least in the long run because of Er's untimely death, Judah's intercourse with Tamar resolves a problem which his forefathers, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham, had to face before, childlessness. Furthermore, Judah's and Tamar's intimate encounter not only results in the birth of twins, but Tamar thus secures for Judah the honor of becoming the progenitor of King David. The significance of the twins' birth is further underscored by the following terminological pattern, which is based on the noun "name."

12 This verb also occurs in 38:4, 24, 25.
13 Menu, 17.
The Noun אֱלֹהִי

It is a well-known fact that in ancient genealogies the seventh slot has at times been reserved for a highly honored person (cf. Gen 5:21-24/Jude 14; Ruth 4:18-22).\textsuperscript{14} In view of this fact it may be more than accidental that the seventh time the noun אֱלֹהִי "name" (864/103) appears, the name of Perez, the ancestor of the Davidic dynasty, is given. In my opinion, Menn correctly maintains that the significance of the detailed description of the "double event of birth and naming in comparison with the formulaic description of the three single births in the first birth narrative attests to the relative significance of the twins."\textsuperscript{15}

If it is true that this story is aiming at the climactic birth of twins, with Perez as the more important of the two sons,\textsuperscript{16} the author has obviously attained his objective by placing Perez's name in the seventh position.

Each of the three preceding terminological patterns, being based on the two verbs נַפְרָא and נָפְרָא בַּא and the noun אֱלֹהִי, supports the notion of literary unity. The first terminological pattern extends from vv. 2 to 18, the second from v. 9 as far as v. 28; and the last one, reaching from vv. 1 to 30, encloses the whole narrative from its very beginning to the end. While Gen 38 thus turns out to be a fine example of Hebrew narrative art, it is certainly even more amazing to detect the author's adroit artfulness in interlinking Gen 38 with what precedes and follows.

\textsuperscript{15} Menn, 28.
\textsuperscript{16} Cf. Menn, 82.
Terminological Patterns Beyond Genesis 38

In the aforementioned study on terminological patterns in Leviticus, no less than twenty-one macrostructures have been pointed out, each structural outline encompassing a major part of the present book of Leviticus. In a very similar way the ancient author of Genesis has seemingly created long-range terminological patterns interlinking Gen 38 with the preceding patriarchal stories and even the *Urgeschichte*.

There can be no doubt that in the Judah-Tamar narrative the development of the plot depends very much on Tamar's artfulness in beguiling her father-in-law. In order not to be recognized and thus to have her scheme wrecked, she has to put aside, i.e., to take off (רְפָע) her widow's clothes (v. 14); and in order to hide behind anonymity, she had better cover (כָּרָה) her face with a veil (v. 14). After having recovered from mourning his wife's death, Judah goes up to his men who are shearing sheep. On his way he notices a veiled woman, and considering her to be a prostitute, Judah turns (לָצְתָה) to her and in plain terms inquires about her price for venal love (v. 16). Following this portentous intercourse--in the word's double meaning--with her father-in-law, Tamar returns home and again puts on her widow's clothes (דְּגָב) (v. 19).

According to many commentators, Gen 38 should be seen as an originally independent narrative standing clearly outside of the Joseph story. Whatever the oral and/or written prehistory of this episode might have been, each of the terms pointed out, which are indispensable to the plot of the story, appears in this very narrative for the seventh time in Genesis. Did the author of the extant text possibly attempt to convey the "completeness" and "perfection" of this encounter, a sexual encounter during which the ancestor of David was conceived, by means of using each of the above-mentioned terms, in the extant text of Genesis for the seventh time? In order to bring home the distinct differences between a diachronic interpretation as, for example, presented by Chr. Levin in his redaction-critical study on the "Jahwist," and the exclusively synchronic approach taken in the present study, the following has been done: in the right margin of each of the following tables Levin's results have been inserted, and in each case his sigla have been used, whereas

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18 Levin, 51: J⁰ = pre-Jahwistic sources ("vor)ahwistische Quellen"); J⁰ = Jahwist redaction ("jahwistische Redaktion"); J' = post-Jahwistic additions ("nachjahwistische Ergänzungen"); P = Priestly Source ("Priesterschrift"); R = final redaction ("Endredaktion"); R'' = "post-final-redaction" additions ("nachendredaktionelle Ergänzungen"). If we cast a glance at the respective commentaries, Levin's assigning texts to different redactional layers turns out to be one of many
The sigla have not been added to the terminological patterns presented above, since Levin considers Gen 38 in toto to be the result of what he calls "post-Jahwistic additions."

The Verb יורס

The distribution of the verb יורס "turn aside; take off" (300/11) in Genesis is seemingly of significance because of the seventh position. Tamar's taking off her widow's clothes and covering herself with a veil in order not to be recognized in the encounter with her father-in-law constitutes the first indispensable move in order to achieve her objective, i.e., to be impregnated by Judah:

possibilities proposed by commentators. Therefore, we should be cognizant of two sobering statements, the first one made by R. N. Whybray concerning the present state of Pentateuchal studies: "There is at the present moment no consensus whatever about when, why, how, and through whom the Pentateuch reached its present form, and opinions about the date of composition of its various parts differ by more than five hundred years" (Introduction to the Pentateuch [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 12-13). Second, concerning a final redactor, Blenkinsopp remarks: "The contribution, even the existence, of a final redactor is one of the fuzziest issues in the study of the formation of the Pentateuch. One thing does seem clear, however, though not always acknowledged: the final redaction was not the work of P" U. Blenkinsopp, "P and J in Genesis 1:1-11:26: An Alternative Hypothesis," in Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday, ed. A. B. Beck, A. H. Bartelt, P. R. Raabe and C. A. Franke [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995], 6).
Having taken off her widow's clothes, she has to take the second step in disguising herself by covering her face with a veil and it is the distribution of the verb כסה "cover" in Genesis which will be discussed next.

The Verb כסה

The seventh occurrence of the verb כסה "cover" (156/8) in Genesis is likewise found in Gen 38:14a. Because it seems rather unlikely that the seventh occurrences of the two verbs, רוע and כסה, would appear accidentally in a single sentence, "She took off [רעה] her widow's clothes, and covered [כסה] herself with a veil to disguise herself" (v. 14ax), we should reckon with some author's deliberate structural design:

Having completed her part by carefully disguising herself, she has now to wait for Judah to become actively involved and perform his part. As soon as the widower looks upon the putative prostitute, his sexual desire seems to be aroused, because he (instantaneously) turns to her, and it is the verb כנה "turn" which will be considered next.

The Verb כנה

The overall distribution of the verb כנה "turn aside; bend down low; spread out, pitch [a tent]" (185/9) in Genesis gains in momentum because of its seventh position in Gen 38:16. Having turned toward the "prostitute," Judah immediately comes down to business: "He turned [יכנה] to her by the roadside and said, ‘Please let me come into you’, for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law" (38:16):
The five preceding structures based on the verbs נמות, רְס, הָשַׁק, and יָפְנָה have possibly been used by the ancient author to depict both the piquantness and pointedness of this portentous encounter. Following the sexual intercourse with her father-in-law, Tamar returns to her father's house and puts on her widow's clothes again, and it is the noun בגד "clothes; garment" we shall look at next.

The Noun בגד

The seventh occurrence of the noun בגד "garment" (215/14) in Genesis is closely related to the two preceding structures. Whereas the seventh occurrences of the verbs רְס and נמות describe Tamar's taking off her widow's clothes and covering herself with a veil, the noun בגד is used for the seventh time in depicting the reversal: "And she rose, went away and she took off her veil and put on her widow's clothes [בגד אלמנה] again" (38:19):
There can be no doubt that the ancient author aptly includes the taking off (v. 14) of her widow's clothes and the re-dressing (v. 19) in significant terminological patterns.

Furthermore, as can be gathered from the preceding table both in Gen 38 and the Joseph story, the "garment motifs\(^{19}\) seemingly plays a


Whereas the majority of scholars view this chapter as composite, a close reading of the extant text reveals an impressive seven-part chiastic structure, by means of which Lev 16 shows itself as a creatively composed literary whole:
significant role. Six occurrences of the nominal form נַעַלָּן (נ) ("his garment") in Gen 39 are capped by the seventh תֶּשׁ יָדָן "linen garment" in 41:42: "Then Pharaoh ... dressed him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck." In view of Joseph's reply to Potiphar's wife, "How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" (39:9b), this subtle and surprising structure seemingly corroborates the significant statement, "the Lord was with Joseph" (39:2, 21). Are we to understand this structure as a subtle authorial hint pregnant with theological meaning? Because of his being faithful to the Lord and leaving נַעַל "his clothes" in the hands of the mendacious seductress, Joseph is finally "rewarded" by being dressed in "fine robes of linen" and is made "second-in-command" in Egypt. If we take the fourteen texts of the above structure at face value, we cannot help but admit that by means of the noun נַעַל the author of the extant text of Genesis has created a perfect terminological pattern by means of which a major section of the present-day book of Genesis has been structured."

**Conclusion**

The search for terminological patterns has seemingly proven profitable. Both within the narrow confines of Gen 38 and the framework of the book of Genesis, the structuring function of terminological patterns has been brought to light. Hence there can be hardly any doubt that by having scrutinized the structure, i.e., the "form," the "content" has been elucidated. If it is true to fact that in "literature the form is meaningful ... ; in literature the form creates meaning ... ; in literature the meaning exists in and through form," then the terminological patterns presented above should be evaluated as exquisite examples. In view of the fact that in scrutinizing the structure of a given biblical text "our option consists of the alternative between more or less substantiated hypotheses, not between a hypothesis and no hypothesis," we ought to be mindful that "the reliability of theories is conditioned by their degree

20 Further terminological and thematic links between Gen 38 and its immediate context have been pointed out, for example, by Cassuto, 30-31; Blum, 245; Wenham, 363-365; Menn, 75-78.
of explanatory power."\(^{23}\) Since it is of course self-evident that in matters like these "all one can aspire to is to elevate a possibility into a serious probability or, in other words, to propose a better hypothesis,"\(^{24}\) the reader is called upon to weigh the evidence and then to decide for herself or himself, whether in Pentateuchal studies a systematic synchronic approach should at last be taken more seriously.

In my opinion the message conveyed through the distinct terminological patterns enables us to better understand the eminent role that Judah holds among his brothers in the last chapters of Genesis and that his (royal) descendants have held throughout the history of Israel. And in case the foregoing observations are true to the authorial intentions, we may conclude that by means of dexterous structural designs the biblical writer subtly promulgates profound theological tenets.


\(^{24}\) Blenkinsopp, 1.
The Tree of Life

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In the Genesis account of the origins of humanity, a "tree of life" is found growing in the garden of Eden both when man is placed there (Gen. 2:9) and when he is driven out (Gen. 3:22-24). Along with so many other figures in the narrative--the great river, the serpent, the cherubim and flaming sword, and of course the other tree ("the tree of the knowledge of good and evil")--this tree of life intrigues us and leads us to ask a number of questions: What exactly is it? How does it fit into the larger story of Genesis 2-3? Did Adam and Eve have access to it before they were expelled from Paradise? What happened to the tree after their departure?

The scope of this exegesis precludes a consideration of the Creation and Fall in any detail. It is hoped that this more limited investigation of one particular motif in that story will contribute to an understanding and appropriation of the whole.

Historical Background and Development

As commentaries uniformly note, the concept of life-giving substances used by both gods and mortals is found throughout the ancient world. The "tree of life" is one such substance. Similar substances include other types of plants; bread; and water.Outside the Fertile Crescent one finds in the mythology of India a heavenly tree from which the deities obtain a life-giving drink called "soma" in Sanskrit. From Greece we know, of course, of ambrosia and nectar.

Within Israel's own sphere we find more than one deity in Egypt associated with a sacred tree.

Hathor and Nut dwelt in the great tree of heaven and supplied the souls of the dead with celestial food, while Nut appears in a vignette of the Book of the Dead in a sycamore. The olive-tree was the abode of Horus and the date-palm that of Nut designed on a Nineteenth Dynasty relief with human arms and breasts holding a jar from which two streams of water emerge and a tray of food.2

In Sumerian mythology the *gishkin* tree in the temple of Enki at Eridu "may well represent a tree of life."3 As for the Babylonian and Assyrian literature,

Strangely enough the term "the tree of life" does not occur in any Akkadian text . . . . On the other hand, pictorial representations are found of the king carrying out certain rites with a stylized tree, which in modern literature on the subject is often described as the tree of life.4

However, if no tree of life *per se* is found in the literature, notice should be taken both of the Gilgamesh epic and the Adapa creation myth.

In the latter story Adapa, following the orders of his father Ea, unwittingly refuses the "bread of death" and "water of death" offered to him by the gatekeepers of heaven, not knowing that had he accepted their offer he would thereby have gained immortality. The epic of Gilgamesh is even more instructive. In it the Noah-like figure Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh of a magical, life-renewing plant at the bottom of the sea and says, "If thy hands obtain the plant (thou wilt find new life)." Gilgamesh does a bit of deep-sea diving, secures the plant, and tells Urshanabi, his boatman, "Its name shall be 'Man Becomes Young in Old Age.' I myself shall eat (it) and thus return to the state of my youth." Gilgamesh's plans are thwarted, however, by a serpent(!) who steals the plant while Gilgamesh is taking a bath.6

Thus the concept of a life-giving tree in the garden of Eden would not have been strange at all to Israel, given the time and place in which

3 So Childs, p. 695. Geo. Widengren (*The King and the Tree of Life in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* [Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift 1951:4; Uppsala: A.-B. Lundsast, 1951] 6) says, "That this *kiskanu*-tree, in the Sumerian text *gis-kin*, is identical with the tree of life is perfectly clear."
4 Ringgren, pp. 78, 79. So also Childs, p. 695. For examples of the art, see Widengren, pp. 61-63.
6 Again the translation is by Speiser, in Pritchard, *ANET*, p. 96.
she lived. What is a bit surprising is the fact that relatively few subsequent references to the tree of life are found in the Bible. Four times it appears in Proverbs (3:18, 11:30, 13:12, and 15:4); and many scholars think the prophet Ezekiel at least alludes to the tree of life in such passages as Ezekiel 31:3-9 and 47:12. Beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 4:10-12, there is a growing use of the tree-of-life motif in the apocalyptic literature, as evidenced by such passages as 1 Enoch 24:4; 2 Enoch 8:3, 5, 8; 9:1; 2 Esdras 8:52; and T. 12 Patriarch 18:10-14. Christian apocalyptic also utilizes the motif, as illustrated by the four references to the tree of life in the book of Revelation (2:7 and 22:2, 14, 19).

**Literary Considerations**

Having established the fact that the concept of a life-giving tree was quite plausible to Israel, we must now turn to the two specific passages in Genesis 2-3 in which the tree is mentioned. In the first passage (Gen. 2:9) we find trees, trees, and more trees:

> And out of the ground God Yahweh caused to grow various trees that were a delight to the eye and good for eating, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

The concluding verses of the narrative (Gen. 3:22-24) focus only on the tree of life:

> And God Yahweh said, "Now that the man has become like one of us in discerning good from bad, what if he should put out his hand and taste also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" So God Yahweh banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. Having expelled the man, he stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

Even at a glance both passages present us with problems. (1) The syntax of Genesis 2:9 is very awkward, suggesting to some commentators either that the original text mentioned only one tree, or that we are dealing with two originally separate accounts, each having a different

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7 I regret that I did not have access to J. L. McKenzie, "The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2-3," *TS* 15 (1954) 541-572.

8 The translations of both Gen. 2:9 and 3:22-24 are those of E. A. Speiser as found in Genesis (AB 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964) 14, 23.

9 Speiser, 20.
tree.\textsuperscript{10} (The syntax of the phrase "and (the) tree of the-to-know good and bad" and the vexed question of what this "knowledge of good and bad" in fact was cannot be considered here.)\textsuperscript{11} (2) The syntax of Genesis 3:22 is also more difficult than Speiser's rendering of it would indicate.\textsuperscript{12} Furthermore, verses 23 and 24 are taken by some to be a doublet, thus giving another indication of more than one source.\textsuperscript{13}

(3) The very fact that the tree of life is introduced in Genesis 2:9 and not mentioned again until Genesis 3:22-24 seems strange. It is the other tree—the tree of knowledge—that is at the heart of the story (Gen. 2:17, 3:5, 6).\textsuperscript{14}

What are we to make of all this? Do we in fact have two originally separate accounts now rather clumsily glued together? More recent scholarship generally agrees that this is not the case:

It is recognized today that the architectonic structure of the pentateuchal narratives, and particularly of Genesis, cannot be the result of chance or of a 'scissors-and-paste' method of compilation, but represents a religious and literary achievement of the highest order.\textsuperscript{15}

If, then, the narrative is to be considered in its present integrity, how are we to hear it? What is being said about the origins of humanity; and precisely how does the tree of life fit into the story?

The key to the interpretation of the story lies in taking Genesis 2:9 as the conclusion to the larger unit of verses 4b-9. In this unit we are told that man became a living being when he was formed by God from the earth and when God breathed his own life-giving breath into man. Thus the ultimate source of life for man was God.


\textsuperscript{11} For a convenient summary of the various interpretations of the phrase "good and evil", see Childs, 696. Significant recent articles are by B. Reicke, "The Knowledge Hidden in the Tree of Paradise," \textit{JSS} 1 (1956) 193ff.; and R. Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the OT and the Qumran Scrolls," \textit{JBL} 76 (1957) 123ff.

\textsuperscript{12} See the comments by Speiser, 24, on the words rendered in the RSV "Behold" (Heb \textit{hen}) and "and now" (Heb \textit{we`atta}).

\textsuperscript{13} Thus Skinner, 88-89. On the cherubim and flaming sword, see Speiser, 24-25, and von Rad, 94-95.

\textsuperscript{14} Indeed, the tree of knowledge is said to be "in the middle of the garden" in Gen. 3:3; but it is the tree of life that is "in the middle of the garden" in Gen. 2:9.

\textsuperscript{15} Gordis, 129. Cf. also Childs, 696.
Having given man life, God next gives man an environment—a
garden (more nearly a park) filled with trees, at a time when the rest
of the earth had neither plants nor herbs (Gen. 2:5). And we are told
specifically that two trees—one of life, the other of knowledge—are
included in this Park of Paradise.

After inserting a geographical interlude dealing with the great river
which watered Eden and went on in four tributaries to encompass the
world, the narrator quickly returns to his main theme and focuses
attention on the last tree mentioned in Genesis 2:9, namely, the tree of
knowledge. Of every other tree in the garden man may freely eat; but
of this one he may not, on penalty of death. Verse 17 leaves the
narrator's listeners asking themselves, "What will man do? Will he eat
of that tree or not? Will he obey or disobey?"

The answer is postponed until a new theme can be introduced, that
of woman as a partner for man (Gen. 2:18-25). With Genesis 3 both
strands of the narrative are picked up and woven together in the story
of the Fall. And in the middle of both the story and the garden stands
the tree of knowledge. It stands for the tragic disobedience of both
man and woman; it is a mute witness of their unfaith.

But the narrator has not forgotten (nor, one would suspect, has his
audience) the other tree, the tree of life. Can disobedient man remain
in the garden and still live forever by eating of its fruit, thus escaping
his sentence of death? By no means. Man should not have eaten of
the tree of knowledge; now he cannot eat of the tree of life. He is
banished—absolutely, permanently—from Paradise.

Thus the narrative functions as a harmonious whole: Of all the
trees in the garden, two are singled out for special notice. One becomes
the symbol of the decisive choice man must make in response to the
divine command. Once man makes his decision, the other tree becomes
the symbol of all man's shattered aspirations, his dreams of what
might have been, forever in his memory but always out of his reach.

Theological Significance

We may introduce our final considerations of the tree of life and
how it functions theologically in Genesis 2 and 3 with this question: If
Adam and Eve had access to the tree while they were still in the
Garden, and, if they had eaten of it, would it not have been too late
for God to cast them out? Would they not already be immortal?
Some have taken the position that eating of the tree of life was not
a once-for-all event, but rather a matter of regular eating. This
interpretation, which cites many parallels in comparative religions,
takes the Hebrew word *gam* in Genesis 3:22 as "again" rather than "also." But such an interpretation misses the urgency of verse 22 and the decisiveness of verse 24. Whatever logical difficulties it may present to the modern reader, the clear implication of verse 22 is that man has in some sense already become like God by having eaten of the tree of knowledge. But of the tree of life he has not eaten; nor will he eat.

How then are we to understand God's act of denying man access to this tree? One interpretation suggests that God was, in effect, doing man a favor, since eternal life coupled with a knowledge of good and evil would be intolerable. However, the clear implication of verses 22-24 is that a punishment is being carried out and not that a favor is being shown. Another interpretation suggests that the tree of life somehow represents a false substitute for the genuine life offered by God and defined as a harmonious coexistence with him. But again, the tree of life as it first appears in Genesis 2:9 does not seem to be a mythical and ultimately unsatisfactory substitute for real life, but rather the symbol of it.

As has been observed, Genesis 2:4-9 pulsates with life itself. God creates man and infuses him with life. God then prepares the perfect environment for life in the form of a beautiful park at the very center of which is nothing less than the tree of life. Man may thus anticipate living indefinitely, with God, in Paradise.

But is man willing to live such a life in such a place on God's terms? That is the unavoidable question put to man in the form of the tree of knowledge and God's restriction concerning it. To his everlasting regret, man is not content with God's arrangements and must have "knowledge." "Knowledge" man acquires; but in the process he loses "life."

At this point some of the observations of Dietrich Bonhoeffer seem particularly cogent. In commenting on Genesis 3:22-24, he says,

The whole story finally comes to a climax in these verses. The significance of the tree of life, of which so remarkably little had been said earlier, is only really comprehensible here. Indeed, it is now obvious that the whole story has really been about this tree. . . . Adam only reaches out for the fruit of the tree of life after he

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17 Von Rad, 98, says: "All in all, it (the narrative) closes in profound sadness."
18 B. Childs, 696-697.
has fallen prey to death.... Adam has eaten of the tree of knowledge, but the thirst for the tree of life, which this fruit has given him, remains unquenched. . . . The tree of life is guarded by the power of death; it remains untouchable, divinely unapproachable. But Adam's life before the gate is a continuous attack upon the realm from which he is excluded. It is a flight and a search upon the cursed ground to find what he has lost, and then a repeated, desperate rage against the power with the flaming sword. That this sword of the guard cuts, that it is sharp--this the biblical writer says, not without reason; Adam knows this, he feels it himself time and again: but the gate remains shut.\(^\text{19}\)

As dismal as the concluding verses of Genesis 3 are, however, they are not the final word of God. Even before they are separated from the tree of life, Adam and Eve anticipate the procreation and thus the continuation of human life; and God himself provides for them the clothes they will need outside the Garden (Gen. 3:20, 21). Try as he will, Adam cannot regain access to life on his own; witness the pathetic efforts of Adam's descendants at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9). But God, who provided life initially and who sponsors the continuation of that life even if it is now life-in-death, can and will himself bring man back to life--life that is once more abundant (John 10:10) and eternal (John 3:16). Man shall in fact have access to the tree of life once again, not by overcoming the cherubim who guard it but by being allowed to share in heaven's victory over death:

To him who is victorious I will give the right to eat from the tree of life that stands in the Garden of God. . . . Happy are those who wash their robes clean! They will have the right to the tree of life ..." (Rev. 2:7; 22:14).


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TOWARD A LITERARY UNDERSTANDING
OF "FACE TO FACE" (פָּנִים אֲלֵיהֶם
IN GENESIS 32:23-32

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1. Background

Were those who saw the face and heard the voice of Jesus of Nazareth during the first century CE the first (and only) people to encounter God himself in person?¹ Hundreds of years earlier, and recorded in five OT passages, the Lord is said to have encountered humanity פָּנִים אֲלֵיהֶם, that is, face to face.² Surprisingly, given the vast amount of existing material on the OT theophanies, scholars have yet to discover the theological richness of these specific encounters.³ Therefore, with the use of certain textual, literary, and historical tools, this essay explores the four central elements inherent in the ancient Israelite understanding of their Lord's face to face interaction with his people. In the process, it also touches on how this concept affected the ancient Israelite understanding of God, of themselves, and even of the great patriarchs of their faith.

The study of the Lord's intimate presentation of himself in OT literature is central to understanding the nature of God's relationship with his chosen people, and it is within the context of the Lord's self-revelation that פָּנִים אֲלֵיהֶם is selectively used in five separate passages, one of which is Gen 32:31; Exod 33:11; Deut 34:10; Judg 6:22; Ezek 20:35.

¹ That the doctrine of Jesus' fully human-divine nature has been repeatedly challenged and defended by scholars from a wide variety of theological traditions is well known. The purpose of this study, however, is not to analyze the nature of the NT Jesus, but rather to develop a deeper understanding of the OT Lord.
² Gen 32:31; Exod 33:11; Deut 34:10; Judg 6:22; Ezek 20:35.
³ The absence of previous research provides both the wondrous opportunity for new biblical exploration as well as the daunting task of fresh and original research. Consequently, the application of critical analysis to the five passages is done hand in hand with the investigation of ancient interpretations and insights (the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, the targumim, etc.).
32:31: "For I have seen Elohim face to face (אֱלֹהִים פָּנֵיתוֹ)." This Hebrew phrase is reserved for encounters between the human and the divine, and although פָּנֵיתוֹ is used in specific circumstances and with certain parameters, it is not limited to use in a single book or a major division of the OT. Those involved in seeing God face to face include Jacob, Moses, Gideon, and the Israelites in exile. The Genesis 32 encounter on the shores of the Jabbok is explored on its own terms, and all the findings are united to form a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional nature of פָּנֵיתוֹ interaction. Specifically, the four inherent elements are (1) divine initiation, (2) profound intimacy, (3) intentional solitude, and (4) super natural verification.

Although the textual source for this study is the Masoretic Text (MT) as presented in BHS (4th ed.), other sources are carefully considered as well. The Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) not only sheds valuable light on the text of the Hebrew Bible, but, more importantly, it also presents an ancient understanding of the text. For example, given the conservative nature of the Samaritans, it is quite noteworthy when the SP attests a different text from the MT in the פָּנֵיתוֹ passages. Likewise, the Septuagint is a valuable aid in both the study of the textual history of the Hebrew Bible and the study of Jewish thought in the pre-Christian era. Finally, the paraphrastic Targums (Onqelos, Neofiti, and Jonathan) and the Syriac Peshitta have the same tendency as the Samaritan Pentateuch in that they, too, transcendentalize God throughout the text and, therefore, provide helpful interpretive insights.

2. Jacob and God "Face to face"

Perhaps no other OT narrative has evoked a wider range of understanding than that of Jacob as he wrestled with a mysterious opponent at the Jabbok River in Gen 32:23-33 with the identity of Jacob's assailant the

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5 "[The] Samaritan Pentateuch transcendentalizes the concept of God; e. g., wherever in the MT God is said to deal directly with man without a mediator, or to descend to earth, the Samaritan Pentateuch substitutes "the angel of God."" Bruce Waltke, "Samaritan Pentateuch" *ABD* 5.938.

6 "These more or less paraphrastic targums are of more value in understanding the way Jewish people understood their OT than for textual criticism." Bruce Waltke, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament and Its Relation to Exegesis and Theology* *NIDOTTE* 1.59. See also Bernard Grossfeld, "The Targum Onqelos to Genesis" *TAB* 6.19, and Martin McNamara, "Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis" *TAB* IA. 34.

7 In the discussion of Genesis 32, the verse numbering of the MT will be used unless indicated otherwise.
most controversial). Not surprisingly, previous research has identified Jacob's exclamation "I have seen Elohim face to face!" as central to the passage although \textit{face to face} seems to have been lost in the theological shadow of \textit{Elohim}. Consequently, since the nature of \textit{פִּנְיָםִּי אֱלֹהִים - פִּנְיָםִּי} interaction cannot be separated from the identity of those doing the interacting, both elements are explored, albeit the former issue naturally receives more attention than the latter.

3. Genre and Form

One of the first OT scholars to suggest that verses 23 and 33 form the correct textual limits of this passage was Samuel Driver,\footnote{Samuel Driver, \textit{The Book of Genesis} (London: Methuen, 1904) 294.} and his conclusions have been repeatedly confirmed.\footnote{Walter Brueggemann, \textit{Genesis}, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 266; Claus Westermann, \textit{Genesis 12-36}, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 512; Gerhard von Rad, \textit{Genesis}, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 314; Hermann Gunkel, \textit{Genesis}, (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997), 347. (The MT also seems to suggest these limits in that both 32:23 and 33:1 start open D paragraphs).} In addition, both the previous and the following pericopae deal with the relationship between Jacob and Esau, whereas the story of Jacob at the Jabbok omits any reference to Esau and instead focuses on Jacob and his mysterious assailant.\footnote{This distinction is further elaborated in 4. Literary Context.} Both the text itself and the content indicate that Gen 32:23-33 stands apart from the surrounding text as a distinct pericope.

With regard to the genre of this passage, it is evident that the prohibition in verses 32-33\footnote{For example, see von Rad, \textit{Genesis}, 318; George Coats, \textit{Genesis} (FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 230; and Brueggemann, \textit{Genesis}, 270. Also, although it is never repeated anywhere else in the OT, this dietary prohibition is later re-affirmed via Maimonides' Law \# 183 (12th cent. CE).} and the name changes in verses 29 and 31\footnote{See Gunkel, \textit{Genesis}, 353; and E. A. Speiser, \textit{Genesis} (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1964) 256-57.} are primarily etiological in nature. If the formula "until this day" in verse 33 is also considered, the best conclusion is that the entire pericope functions as an etiological folk story\footnote{See Westermann, \textit{Genesis 12-36}, 51. He also suggests that 32:23-33 can be described as a local story because what is narrated leads to the naming of the place and "no memorial stone is erected at the end to mark the place out as holy; it is therefore not a cult story" (ibid., 514).} in which the precise nature of Jacob's \textit{פִּנְיָםִּי אֱלֹהִים - פִּנְיָםִּי} encounter at the Jabbok acts as the \textit{supporting evidence} for the central
element: the name change from Jacob to Israel. In effect, the face to face encounter serves as a supernatural "stamp of approval," as is expanded upon later in this essay, not as a Jacob-initiated victory over a local god or spirit as is suggested by some.

4. Literary Context

Traditionally, the book of Genesis has been divided into two main sections, chapters 1-11 (primeval history) and chapters 12-50 (patriarchal history), with the Jacob narrative placed in the latter. Prior to the events of Jacob's life, the patriarchal families (i.e., Abraham and Isaac) had been seminomadic and had not yet fully occupied the promised land of Canaan. Jacob's encounter at Penuel took place as he, with caution, was about to re-enter Canaan from Paddan Aram, where he had previously fled because of the anger of his brother, Esau. It was a homecoming filled with nervous anticipation.

Brueggemann suggests that within the larger Jacob narrative is a chiastic structure in which the two main themes of the entire narrative are announced -- the mysterious birth of Jacob and Esau and their intense interaction. Brueggemann's chiastic analysis, presented below, identifies not only that the births are the centre of the narrative, but more importantly, that the events of Jacob's struggle at Penuel correspond to Jacob's previous dream of God at Bethel.

  - [Human-Divine] Meeting at Bethel (28:10-22)
    - Conflict with Laban (29:1-30)
    - Births (29:31-30:24)
    - Conflict/Covenant (30:25-31:55)
  - [Human-Divine] Meeting at Penuel (32:22-32)
  - Reconciliation with Esau (33:1-17)
- Closure and Transition (33:18-36:43)

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14 See 4. Literary Context.
15 For example, von Rad writes, "How close our story is to all those sagas in which gods, spirits or demons attack a man and in which then the man extorts something of their strength and their secret" (Genesis, 316). Sharing the same thought, Gunkel states that this story about Jacob is "closely related to those legends and fairy tales that tell of a god compelled by a human through deceit or force to leave behind his secret knowledge or something else divine" (Gunkel, Genesis, 352).
16 Promised to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), Isaac (Gen 26:3-5), and Jacob (Gen 28:13-15).
17 Brueggemann, Genesis, 213. He also theorizes that the previous Abraham narrative is preoccupied with the concept of promise and the Jacob narrative with that of blessing (ibid., 206).
Within the smaller pericope of Gen 32:22-32 is another chiasm evident as well. The alternating speech between Jacob and his adversary, presented within the literary framework of seven (and he said), draws the reader to the central point (the fourth) of Jacob's own name, as shown below.

- Adv.: "Let me go for the dawn is rising." (v. 27)
- Jacob: "I will not send you away unless you bless me." (v. 27)
- Adv.: "What is your name?" (v. 28)
  - Jacob: "Jacob." (v. 28)
- Adv.: "Your name is not called Jacob anymore but Israel, for. ..." (v. 29)
- Jacob: "Please tell me your name." (v. 30)
- Adv.: "Why do you ask my name?" (v. 30)

Finally, a survey of the repetitive literary texture of Gen 32:23-33 in comparison to its immediate context highlights several features of the text itself. The most noteworthy is the complete absence in verses 23-33 of every element except the characters of Jacob and . While Jacob's possessions and his fear of his brother dominate the text before verses 23-33, Jacob's concern about the members of his immediate family are his primary concern in the subsequent passage. As shown in the summary below, the solitary events that took place between verses 23 and 33 dramatically changed Jacob's priorities.

By means of the repetitive texture within the surrounding text, Jacob is intentionally portrayed as being completely separated from all of his possessions and family; the human-divine encounter is between Jacob and alone. There is no one present (friend or foe) either to witness Jacob's profound struggle or to verify the change of his name and identity.

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18 This table is a summary of the full analysis given in Wessner, *Face to Face: Panim el-Panim in Old Testament Literature* (Theological Research Exchange Network, #048-0211, 1998), 109.

19 Jacob's removal and distance from everything else in his life is further emphasized at the end of v. 24 by means of the phrase , which refers to all that Jacob had. In addition, the beginning of v. 25 makes Jacob's separation even clearer by the use of (and Jacob was alone).

20 Includes "mother, children, descendants, Rachel, Leah, Joseph, women."

21 Includes "cattle, donkeys, flocks, camels, ewes, rams, goats, hulds, herds, servants, people."
5. Biblical Context

Interestingly, the events of Jacob's encounter at Penuel are never directly quoted in the OT although the momentous occasion of Jacob's name change to Israel is referred to in two passages. In Gen 35:9-15, Jacob returned to Bethel, where God blessed him and renewed his covenant promise to him. In verse 10 God essentially repeated the words of 32:29: "And God said to him, ‘... no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name.’ And he [Elohim] called his name Israel." The second reference to Jacob's name change is in I Kgs 18:30-38, during the Israelites' dramatic and pivotal change of heart. According to verse 31, Elijah stated that the Lord himself had previously spoken to Jacob, saying, "Israel shall be your name," showing that, like the two passages in Genesis, the changing of Jacob's name to Israel was ultimately, if not directly, accomplished by God.

The concept of "God and man," as used in Gen 32:29, is used elsewhere in the OT, with some scholars seeing it as an expression of totality rather than as referring to two separate entities (i.e., the identification of מֹלַעְנָא as a representative rather than as a distinct individual). For example, Judg 9:9, 13 seem to indicate that "gods and men" is used inclusively and that neither the "gods" nor the "men" are treated individually. If Westermann's analysis is correct, the words of Jacob's assailant, "you have struggled with God and with men," may be representative of Jacob's whole life rather than a specific reference to an individual event (e.g., the crossing of the Jabbok) during the course of his life.

Even though Gen 32:23-33 is never directly quoted elsewhere, there is a significant (and necessary) allusion to it in Hos 12:4-5, which states that Jacob contended with מֹלַעְנָא and also struggled with a אֲנָגֶל (angel). This text, which looks back to various events throughout Jacob's life, is divided into three separate bicola. The first bicolon shows both syntactic and semantic parallelism ב, perfective verbs, ו), while both the second and third have syntactic parallelism (two imperfective verbs with an object in each line and imperfective verbs and object suffixes in each line, respectively).

In this passage, Douglas Stuart notes that the bicolon in verse 4 is the first half of a quatrain that includes verse 5a, thereby uniting the first two bicola under one theme -- Jacob's struggle with his adversary. In fact, this four-line unit also has an inherent chiastic structure of its own, as shown in

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23 As in Genesis 32, the verse numbering in Hosea 12 will follow the MT.
25 שֶׁפֶחַ in v. 4 and either שֶׁפֶחַ (a by-form of שֶׁפֶחַ) or שֶׁפֶחַ in v. 5.
the text below, further clarifying the intentional correspondence between נָּאִיתָם שְׂמַע and מְלַגָּא.

a In the womb he grasped the heel of his brother
b and in his strength he contended with Elohim. 26
b' He ruled over/struggled with an angel and prevailed
a' he wept and he pled for grace with him. 27

Therefore, despite the elaborate attempts of some scholars 28 to explain verse 5a as parallel to events in Jacob's life 29 other than his wrestling at the Jabbok (e.g., Gen 30:8), Hosea is simply referring to Jacob's physical struggle with מְלַגָּא and is as ambiguous about the identity of his assailant as is the narrator of the Genesis account. For Hosea, the מְלַגָּא with whom Jacob contended is not to be understood as God himself but rather as corresponding to נָּאִיתָם שְׂמַע, that is, a messenger sent on behalf of God.

6. Other Ancient Literature

Although the story of Jacob's wrestling at the Jabbok has no biblical parallels, it does have a loose connection with other Ancient Near Eastern accounts, and its apparent association with other ANE river-deity encounters is well documented. 30 Ronald Hendel, however, is careful to say that "Jacob's adversary is neither a night demon nor a river-god; Jacob names him in v. 31 as Elohim. Nonetheless there are thematic continuities in the Penuel encounter with traditional images of other conflicts and other gods." 31 Hendel also sees YHWH's adversarial role evident in other OT passages such as when YHWH seeks to kill Moses (Exod 4:24-26) and when he tests Abraham (Genesis 22). Quite possibly, the narrator of Genesis may have had such a parallel in mind, although he did not mimic it exactly. For example, Jacob was not completely victorious (he left with a physical limp), and although he received a blessing, the focus of the text seems to be on the changing of his name.

26 מְלַגָּא can refer to God, divine beings (Zech 12:8) or ghosts (1 Sam 28:13), and even Moses was given the title by the Lord himself (Exod 7:1).
27 Cf. Gen 33:4, 8.
29 For example, nowhere else does the OT record Jacob weeping or pleading with an angel.
30 For example, see John Scullion, "The Narrative of Genesis" ABD 2.952, Westermann, Genesis 12-36, 515; and Gunkel, Genesis, 352.
31 Ronald Hendel, The Epic of the Patriarch (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) 105. He gives the example of a 7th-cent. BCE Phoenician incantation of the god Sasam that says, "The sun rises 0 Sasam: Disappear, and fly away home."
Since it is generally accepted that the ancient Samaritan Pentateuch systematically avoids any anthropomorphic presentation of God, it is significant that the Genesis 32 pericope does not reflect any variant from the text of the Masoretes. This could indicate that 1) the passage was "overlooked" in the translation/interpretation process (which is unlikely, given the thousands of variants elsewhere); 2) the Samaritans were not offended by God's personal encounter with Jacob (also unlikely considering the prevalence of transcendentalization throughout the text); or 3) the Samaritans did not consider the recorded events as portraying a physical and direct encounter between God himself and an earth-bound man. Clearly, the third option is the most logical because the Samaritans likely understood that Jacob's statement "I have seen Elohim face to face" was not blasphemous since Jacob's adversary was not actually YHWH in person, but rather was someone with God-sent authority.

With regard to the Genesis 32 pericope, the Septuagint reflects the same textual nuances as the MT, especially in two significant elements. Similar to the Hebrew מִנְיָּ֣וֹן, the Greek term θεός used in verse 31 ("I saw θεός face to face") does not necessarily refer exclusively to God, but can also refer to a man, as in Exod. 7: 1. Of prime importance to this study, however, is the use of "face to face" (πρόσωπον πρόσωπον πρόσωπον) in the Septuagint text of verse 30. In his speech, Jacob declared, "I saw (ὁράω, 2d aorist active) θεός face to face" reflecting the corresponding Hebrew syntax of "I have seen (ראַּא, Qal) מִנְיָּ֣וֹן face to face." In both texts, Jacob (the subject) asserted himself to be acting as the active agent in the face to face encounter, a role that the Biblical narrator reserves exclusively for God or his agent in the four other OT passages.

Written hundred of years later, Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, and the Peshitta all reflect significant variations from the Hebrew text surrounding the phrase מִנְיָּ֣וֹן in Genesis 32. Since the nature of these writings is to paraphrase and interpret freely during the process of translation, it is not surprising that Jacob's adversary is clearly identified in the texts as an angel.32 By the time of the targumim and the Peshitta, there is little room for misinterpreting the identity of Jacob's opponent at Jabbok; he is clearly understood as an angelic being representing the Lord.

7. Conclusion

The Genesis text unquestionably says that Jacob physically saw someone face to face, but that someone was neither an ordinary man nor God himself,33 as is often assumed, but rather a messenger acting on behalf of

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32 Targum Neofiti goes even further by actually naming the angel as ‘Sariel’ (v. 25).
33 As for other instances of the seemingly intentional blurring of the distinction
God. Not only does the text itself suggest this conclusion by the intentional use of מָיִלְוַז, but the earliest readers also understood that Jacob's adversary was a divine messenger (cf. Hosea, Targum Onqelos, Targum Neofiti, and the Peshitta).

As in all five biblical occurrences of רֶפִּין אל-רֶפִּין, the four inherent elements of divine initiation, profound intimacy, intentional solitude, and supernatural verification are clearly evident in Gen 32:23-33. For example, Jacob's wrestling match was caused by the sudden appearance and unexpected attack of the heavenly sent "man" during the night. Ironically, Jacob had spent the previous day preparing for a dramatic encounter, but he was expecting to meet his brother Esau, not the powerful messenger who was declared to be אל-רֶפִּין not only was Jacob's encounter physically intimate, but it also involved the very essence of his identity—the identification and the change of his name. The physical touch, the name change, and the personal blessing all serve to portray the profound intimacy experienced between Jacob and the divine messenger.

As well, the Hebrew text of the pericope presents Jacob's complete solitude quite effectively not only by stating that "he sent across [the Jabbok] all that he had" and he "was left alone," but also by the complete absence of any terms of possession or family in verses 23-33. Therefore, the divinely initiated מָיִלְוַז interaction, including the supernaturally induced limp (and possibly the prohibition), served as a God-sent physical "sign" to verify and legitimize the primary (and private) event of the pericope, that is, the change of Jacob's name to Israel. Both the personal and theological significance of his encounter required some type of verification from God himself (cf. Moses and the pillar of cloud, Gideon and the sacrifice consumed by fire) if his unique encounter was to be taken seriously. His was no mere spiritual or illusory encounter that could easily be dismissed by his contemporaries: it was a physical encounter with the divine.

between a man, the Lord, and an angel, one need look no further than other passages such as Genesis 16 (Hagar), Genesis 18-19 (Abraham), or Judges 13 (Manoah).

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A Taxonomy of Creation

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The spectrum of possible viewpoints on origins is explored and reclassified on the basis of three levels of questions. First, what is the relationship of God to the natural world? Second, how might God act (or not act) to produce novelty and direction? Third, what is the pattern of appearance?

Few disagreements in modern thought are as confusing as the debate over the relationship of God to the creation of the natural world. Certainly real issues are at stake, but one gropes after them, confused by clouds of rhetorical smoke. The confusion could be much reduced by clearer definitions from both "sides." Both "evolutionists" and "creationists" do much categorical pigeon-holing and give multiple definitions to their banner words--evolution and creation. For example (Fig. 1), evolution has been defined as "fact" (observed change in gene frequency); as "mechanism" (neo-Darwinian natural selection); as "scenario" (the descent of species from common ancestors by transformation); as a "central paradigm" ("Nothing in Biology makes sense except in the light of evolution"--Dobzhansky, 1973), and as a materialistic "weltanschaung" ("The whole of reality is evolution, a single process of self-transformation."--Huxley, 1953). The meaning of the word "Creation" has been equally abused in exactly the same way (see Fig. 2). What seems to be needed for communication is some new way to classify viewpoints. The goal of this paper is the beginning of such a "taxonomy of creation."
The Relationship of God to the Natural World

The first principle of systematics is that some differences in structure are more important than others. Part of the fuel for the "origins" debate has been a lack of insight into which conceptual differences are central and distinctive, and which are secondary and peripheral. I suggest that in such a proposed classification the world-view is central. In relation to science, the most important conceptual distinctive in world-views is the relationship between the cosmos (matter) and Deity. I will discuss four distinct aspects of this relationship, and will distinguish a spectrum of five world-views, based on the presumed degree of autonomy of the natural order. This classification is summarized in Figures 3 and 4. The dominant world-view of our age among scientists is materialistic naturalism, which holds the universe to be completely autonomous in every aspect of its existence. On the other hand, both the ancient Hebrews and the early modern scientists (Robert Boyle, for instance) held a full theism, viewing the universe as completely dependent in every aspect (see Fig. 3) (Klaaren, 1977). The three "intermediate" views listed in Figure 4 hold the cosmos to be autonomous in some senses, dependent in others. Figure 4 is not intended to be an exhaustive classification, but is limited to viewpoints which consider a Deity (if existing) to be an eternal, omnipotent spirit other than the cosmos in essence (i.e., pantheistic views are not considered.)

The first two aspects of reality shown in Figure 4, origin and intervention, apply to the possibility of
transcendent divine activity, meaning divine activity which is "ex machina." God acts from outside the natural order, contra "natural law." These aspects are the origin of the system (cosmos, matter, etc.) and the openness of the existing system (cosmos) to outside intervention or intrusion. The second two aspects, existence and direction, apply to the possibility of immanent divine activity; i.e., God acting in concert with the natural order, through "natural law." These aspects therefore imply a certain relationship between "natural law" and God. They concern the continuing existence and behavior of matter and the possibility of directive activity taking place through (using) natural law. In the next few paragraphs, I will briefly explore the meaning of autonomy versus dependence for each aspect.

Few ultimate options exist for the origin of the cosmos. A truly autonomous origin (Fig. 4; origin) could only be thought to happen in one way: the material system must be in some sense cyclic. Either mass/energy is eternal (presumably oscillating), or energy is fed backward "past" time (the hyper-dimensional space-time continuum) to emerge at the "creation." Neither of these is a commonly held view at present. Most materialists are simply willing to live with mystery, accepting a universe generating itself ex nihilo via the laws of nature. The alternative viewpoint, dependent origins, posits that a sufficient cause for the initial creation of the system must be outside the system. The Christian view of God is especially satisfying because He has both the will to act and sufficient power. One implication of a dependent origin is that the laws governing the structure of the cosmos are expressions of His will.

Autonomy of the cosmos from outside intrusion, the second aspect (Fig. 4; intervention), is a statement that there can be no "singularities," points where physical
events within the cosmos must be explained in terms of causes from outside the cosmos. The cosmos is either considered to be "all there is" or to be somehow closed to the reality without; or, alternately, the reality without is considered to be of such a nature that it would never "interfere" with lawful processes of the cosmos. If the cosmos is considered open to intrusive action, natural law is not denied, although there is a possibility of events which can not be explained completely from causes within the system. In that case, science could only describe the boundaries of the singularity, rather like a description of a black hole.

The third aspect of reality, existence (Fig. 4), represents a watershed in world-views. A cosmos autonomous in existence does not need a sustaining Deity in order to continue in existence. The law governing its continuance and operation exists directly in its elementary particles. Such a cosmos can live, though God be dead. Natural law itself is autonomous. There can be no doubt that the Biblical writers view "nature" as completely dependent upon the continuing will and action of God. In such a viewpoint natural law itself is the orderly expression of the presently active will of God, and is therefore exterior to the system, rather than being "on the particle." If God is dead, or if His "mind wanders," the universe is non-existent. Due to the positivistic heritage of the last century, we have an instinctive feeling that science is only possible if natural law is an intrinsic characteristic of the particle. However, Klaaren (1977) has argued cogently that it was the view that law was contingent to the will of God which led to the rise of modern science. Science simply requires law, not a particular sort of law.

The fourth aspect, direction (Fig. 4), looks even deeper into the concept of natural law, and may be even more foreign to the contemporary mindset. If law is considered to be a rigid framework which can not, or
will not, permit directive action on the part of God, then the universe is autonomous. Even a sustaining law based on God's active will can be thought of being as completely deterministic and non-directive as the most materialistic of viewpoints. Must one hold such a view if the world is to be made safe for science? Despite the
fears of the twentieth century, modern science began with a world-view which considered the Providential direction of the events of nature fully acceptable. Nor was this direction seen as antagonistic to the concept of secondary causes, but, rather, supportive of them (Klaaren, 1977). This is the position spelled out in the Westminster Confession of Faith, for instance. A dependent universe, in this sense, is one in which God continuously directs all natural events, without tension, through natural law. I think it important to remember that this is no peripheral idea, but one central to the scriptural picture of Divine lordship. Surely we expect Him to act in this fashion if we pray requesting Him to meet specific needs.
How Might Novelty and Direction Be Produced?

Central to the debate concerning biological origins are the questions of the source of novelty and the source of direction. Such questions can form a second level of our "taxonomic hierarchy," as illustrated in Figure 5. Materialists, as well as deists and theists, differ on these questions. If true randomness is characteristic of the movement of atomic particles, such "stochastic" events may add novelty, and even provide direction. If the cosmos is truly deterministic, all events and structures were implicit in the nature of the origin, although many of these events may look random to our limited viewpoint. The most popular viewpoint is a hybrid one, considering novelty to be due to random events (mutation) and direction to be locally deterministic (natural selection).

Full deism may be divided into the same groups as materialism. If the cosmos is deterministic, then all the events were programmed at creation to unroll in time. Both novelty and direction would be fixed by the initial program. Direction is set by the characteristics of natural law, and novelty by the initial state of the cosmos. If the cosmos is stochastic, then God could program potentials, but could not know how the results would work out. Although significant novelty and direction would be implicit from the beginning, the stochastic openness would contribute to both in determining outcomes. One unique differentiation for biology within full deism would be the mode of species creation; from nothing, from abiotic matter, or from a (just) previously created species. In the first two cases, similarity would be due only to common ideas in God's mind. In the third, it would also indicate "common ancestry" (although not due to "natural" processes). Intrusive deism may also be divided into deterministic and stochastic viewpoints. In the deterministic view,
all events are still programmed for both novelty and direction. However, instead of all programming being done at the time of origin, it is also done at many small intrusive "mini-origins" as time passes. A stochastic view would tend to view intrusive events as not only creative and directive, but also as possibly corrective of "wrong" novelty input from stochastic processes (or perhaps, free will).

Legal deists will tend to look at the universe in almost exactly the same ways that the intrusive deists do. However, they will view intervention in a fundamen-
### A Taxonomy of Creation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcendence (God acting from outside &quot;natural law&quot;)</th>
<th>Immanence (God acting through) &quot;natural law&quot;)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origin</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical (Full Theism)</td>
<td>Cosmos is dependent upon God for all aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialism</td>
<td>Cosmos is autonomous from God for all aspects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3. Aspects of the Relationship of God to the Natural World**

- **Origin:** How did the cosmos come into being?--first origins
- **Intervention:** Is the cosmos open to God's direct acts from outside?
- **Existence:** Can the cosmos exist without God? Law in the particles?
- **Direction:** Does God use natural law to direct events' outcome?

Totally different fashion, since they differ in their concept of natural law. In intrusive intervention, God moves against the resistance of natural law which continues in force. The legal deist, however, will view intervention as local points where natural law is temporarily cancelled (or changed) in favor of some alternative divine action. Creation is, of course, that point when God first began to act in the fashion of natural law.

Full theists are significantly different in their viewpoint, since law itself is viewed as an avenue through which God works directively and continuously. Novelty could therefore arise by programming of the initial structures, by "guided" deterministic events, by "chosen" stochastic events, and by "outside" intervention (that which appeared to be an intrusive event). Theistic viewpoints might be distinguished on the basis of which of these mechanisms are emphasized. It would, however, be hard in a given instance to distinguish between
God's various modes of operation, since all are God's hand in action. "Laws" are not seen as a description of what God has made, but rather of His present and free actions. His creative Word of command still actively reverberates from the structure of reality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transcendence (God acts from without &quot;natural law&quot;)</th>
<th>Immanence (God acts from within &quot;natural law&quot;)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Origin Intervention</td>
<td>Existence Direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Full Theism</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Legal Deism</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. Intrusive Deism</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Full Deism</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Materialism</td>
<td>A</td>
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What Is the Pattern of Appearance?

Given the "phyla" of world-views (what is the relationship of God to the world?), and the "classes" of sources of novelty (How does God act upon the world?), I would suggest that the logical "orders" are the scenarios of the appearance of novelty (When did He do it?). The four most extreme possibilities for what the fossil record shows would be as follows: 1) all species appeared suddenly at about the same time, 2) all species appeared suddenly, but at different times, 3) all species appeared gradually at different times, and 4) all
species appeared gradually about the same time. Intermediate views are possible, of course, as illustrated in Figure 6. One may hold any scenario of appearance with each of the world-views in Figure 4, although acceptable explanations for the observed phenomena would vary.

Space will not permit a complete description of all combinations, but, as a brief illustration, consider the possible explanations for the sudden appearance of a species. A materialist might explain it as due to random events which produced a successfully changed regulatory genome, or to deterministic events which reached
David L. Wilcox

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Types of Sources</th>
<th>Dependent Upon God</th>
<th>Autonomous From God</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deterministic:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deterministic:</td>
<td>Providential Selection</td>
<td>Natural Selection</td>
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<tr>
<td>due to environmental direction</td>
<td>(I)</td>
<td>(II, III, IV, V)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deterministic:</td>
<td>Providential Creation</td>
<td>Directionless Mutation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not due to environmental direction</td>
<td>(I, II)</td>
<td>(III, IV, V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Deterministic causes outside of natural law</td>
<td>Intrusive Creation</td>
<td>Stochastic Mutation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(I, II, III, IV)</td>
<td>(III, IV, V)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Alternative Sources of Novelty and Direction

World views which might accept each source are indicated by Roman numerals—following Fig. 4.

- I. Full Theism
- II. Legal Deism
- III. Intrusive Deism
- IV. Full Deism
- V. Materialism

a threshold somewhere (in environment or genome) and caused a sudden change in state. A full deist might agree, but point out that the species was planned for in the initial state of the universe, or at least was a reasonable possibility. An intrusive deist might accept the above as possibilities, but also suggest that new programming might have taken place at that point in geological time. A legal deist would agree, but would emphasize that new programming could have been caused by a local change in the laws of nature which would allow species modification. The theist would probably admit that all the above are possible explanations, but would point out that in any case we are only distinguishing between the various overlapping modes of action which God might use.
Synthesis: Clarifying the Debate

In closing this discussion, I will try to apply the framework which has been developed to four of the positions which are most commonly distinguished in the origins debate (Pun, 1982). These positions (mentioned in Fig. 6) are usually entitled Recent (sometimes called Fiat or Special) Creation(ism), Progressive Creation(ism), Theistic Evolution(ism), and Atheistic Evolution(ism), and are often characterized as a series going from the best to the worst. There is, of course, a difference of opinion concerning which end is "best" and which end is "worst." You can sometimes tell a writer's orientation by the end to which he attaches "ism." In any case, it becomes evident that these terms do not represent single clear world-views, but heterogeneous and contradictory assemblages.

Atheistic Evolution(ism), as usually defined, is merely materialism; i.e., the world-view that the universe is completely autonomous and therefore God is not necessary. In the minds of many, it is also identified exclusively with the continuous appearance scenario, stochastic novelty formation and deterministic direction; i.e., the Modern Synthesis as evolutionary mechanism. Such a confusion of categories gives the impression that the neutral mutation debate, the proposal of punctuated equilibrium, or "directed panspermia," represent covert attempts on the part of certain scientists to subvert or to compromise with a theistic position. This simply is not true. These theories of mechanism are alternate scenarios or explanations, equally derivative from a mechanistic world-view.

Recent Creation(ism), as usually described, is an assemblage of viewpoints which agree only on a specific scenario of the timing of creation (a single sudden appearance), along with a definite rejection of autonomy for the cosmos in origin. It is not a cohesive world-view, however, since supporters can be full,
intrusive, or legal deists, or theists. Currently, their most popular view of the nature of "created kinds" admits that change is possible, but only within the limits of the genetic potentials built into the initial population. (The original "kinds" are not usually identified with species by modern "recent creationists," but most are reluctant to go beyond genera, or perhaps sub-families, in trying to identify them.) Since God's present providential activity in the biological world is not seen as directive and as having purpose, this, particular concept of the limits to change is a fully
Figure 6. Variation in Scenarios of the Appearance of Novelty
Suggested locations on the co-ordinate system for various viewpoints

deistic and deterministic concept of the source of novelty, (although individuals who hold this view in biology are often "theistic" in other areas of thought.) A true theist can not accept the idea that any event in any realm can occur except due to the plan and present taction of God. The physical source of the new "kind" might be thought to be new matter, abiotic material, or a previously created "kind." In any case, the creation process is held to be initiating, very rapid, non-reproducible and not due to the laws of nature. An older concept of species stasis (circa .1840) identified the limits of change with a "platonic ideal" species image in the mind of God, and was therefore more clearly theistic, since God was thought to be continuously acting (via natural law) to bring the (fugitive)
species back to its designed ideal, or to recreate it if it became extinct.

Progressive creation(ism) also seems to represent a heterogenous set of world views which are agreed on the concept that species ("kinds") appear suddenly (special creation), but at considerable intervals, due to intrusive divine acts. Progressive creationists include both intrusive deists, legal deists and full theists. Variation in view exists regarding the source of novelty, with the most common view similar to that of the recent creationist. The "kind" is considered to be initially programmed with no later modification, a typical intrusive deistic viewpoint. As in recent creationism, the physical source of a new "kind" might be thought to be a new matter, abiotic material, or a previously created "kind," and the creation process is held to be interventional, very rapid, and non-reproducable.

A full deist could propose that such a pattern is due to an initially programmed punctuated equilibrium, or a theist, that it represents a divinely directed punctuated equilibrium. Such views would not be included in this viewpoint (as I understand its proponents, at least), despite species origins being both sudden and due to God, because they would still be due to natural law rather than to intrusive intervention. Such viewpoints would usually be cast into the next category.

In any inadequate system of classification, some category must pick up items which do not fit anywhere. That is probably the most accurate definition of what people mean by Theistic Evolution(ism). Everyone has a somewhat different, often pejorative, definition, depending upon exactly how they define the other three categories. In general, all concede that "Theistic Evolutionists" accept both the existence of God, and "regular evolution." For some, that means a full deism with an otherwise autonomous cosmos evolving in a fully materialistic fashion. Others view it as "the God of
the Gaps," a variant of intrusive deism in which materialistic evolution is occasionally helped along by divine intervention. Since these views concede autonomy of law to the material particle, they ought not to be called "theistic." Recent creationists often mean by the term anyone who believes in God (in any sense), yet questions the sudden appearance model, thereby including the progressive creationists, who reject evolution as completely as they do. Materialists may mean anyone who is "scientist first, religious second." Such a potpourri is not a position, but a conceptual trash can.
Is a theistic evolutionary scenario, in the real meaning of the words, possible? Not unless one first limits the meaning of "evolution" to a single concept, for instance, to the descent of one species from another by natural law. In this I follow distinctions and definitions used by Charles Hodge, the well known Princeton theologian of the last century, as he considered Darwin's theories (1874). Anyone who is a fully biblical theist must consider ordinary processes controlled by natural law to be as completely and deliberately the wonderful acts of God as any miracle, equally contingent upon His free and unhindered will. Miracles, after all, are given as signs, not as demonstrations of God's normal activities. What then might a "theistic evolution" look like? One example of a possible theistic scenario would be this: God designs and produces the cosmos, and all of life, by immediately and directly controlled gradual continuous change due to micro-creation (mutation) and providential direction (natural selection) using only natural law. (In parallel with two previous terms, such a view could be called "Continuous Creation" after the scenario of appearance which it advocates.) It could not be held by any of the three forms of deism because it depends upon God directing through natural events. Only a full theist could hold it. The true "scandal" of theism is not that it concedes too much to materialism, but that it refuses to concede so much as the spin of a single electron.

Conclusions
In conclusion, the tension between the materialistic naturalism of our day, and the theistic viewpoint of the scripture may be resolved in one of two fashions. Either one may choose a world-view half-way between the two, as illustrated in Figure 4; or one may consider "naturalism " as a special simplified sub-set of theism, just as Newtonian physics forms a special simplified
sub-set of Einsteinian physics. Materialistic explanations are useful within the limits set by their simplifying assumptions. These simplifying assumptions are the a priori framework of twentieth century science. Theistic or deistic explanations therefore are not acceptable, which is fine as long as the materialistic model of explanation (episteme) is recognized as a model. The value of a model, a simplified representation of reality, is to allow a more complete exploration of how well the assumptions of the model match reality. The danger of any model is the tendency to identify the model with the reality which it represents.

In this paper, I have been proposing a classification of "scientific" views or models (interpretations of nature). Naturally one will choose corresponding scriptural models (interpretations of scripture) (Barnett and Phillips, 1985). Such models do not show one-for-one identity, however. Differing models of what scripture means may be held with the same scientific model, and people with identical scriptural interpretations may differ in their scientific models. In general, the Scriptures' proclamations about the nature of God are easier to understand than its occasional statements about the specific techniques He used at particular times.

I see two things as critical for this debate. First, the Scriptures are unalterably theistic, so we have no real options in world-view. For example, we must not adopt deistic positions to limit God's possible activities to our favorite scenario. Second, we need a humble spirit concerning the correctness of our conclusions—and exclusions. This paper has presented three levels of questions which serve to differentiate various positions on origins, giving as many as one hundred distinctly different positions which might be (and commonly are) held on this subject. It is not surprising that the debate has become rigid and polarized. Complexity bewilders and discourages. Simplicity has a seductive beauty.
(Un)fortunately, neither God, nor His universe, are as simple as we are.

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Abraham in
History and Tradition

Part 1: Abraham the Hebrew

Donald J. Wiseman

The study of Abraham in history and tradition has recently been revived. However, it is accompanied by a recrudescence of a critical trend in Old Testament scholarship which virtually dismisses Abraham as an eponymous ancestor, a mythological hero of legendary sagas, or the projection into the past of later Jewish ideologies seeking for a "founding father." On this basis the Genesis patriarchs are considered by many scholars to be unhistorical, and it is argued that this is no problem because their historicity is irrelevant to the theological value of the biblical narratives. With this development, Old Testament scholars have reacted against and reappraised the extrabiblical evidence which has led to the more conservative understanding and interpretation of a second-millennium B.C. "Patriarchal Age." Both viewpoints will now need to be reevaluated in the light of the recent texts discovered at Ebla, which reveal for the first time the history, language, and culture of the Upper Euphrates in the latter half of the third millennium B.C.


2 Giovanni Pettinato, "Testi cuneiformi del 3. millenium in paleo-cananeo rinvenuti nella campagna 1974 a Tell Mardikh=Ebla," Orientalia 44 (1975): 361-74; and paper read at the XXIIIeme Rencontre Assyriologique Inter-

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first in a series of four articles, prepared by the author for the W. H. Griffith Thomas Memorial Lectures at Dallas Theological Seminary in November, 1976. The editors regret that illness forced Dr. Wiseman to cancel the lectureship, but they are pleased to present the series in print.
It is true that some of the comparisons made between the social background reflected in Genesis and extrabiblical evidence have arisen from the desire of scholars to find parallels in ancient Near Eastern texts. However, dismissing those parallels would not of itself argue against the historical origin or nature of the Genesis texts so much as against the various theories proposed for their interpretation. Van Seters has rightly questioned some of these but goes beyond the evidence when he argues that "there is no real portrayal of a nomadic pre-settlement phase of Israelite society, nor any hint of the migratory movements or political realities of the second millennium B.C." For him the Abrahamic tradition as it stands reflects "only a late date of composition and gives no hint by its content of any great antiquity in terms of biblical history." His argument is that the few nomadic details—the references to camels and tents, the patriarch's presence and movements primarily confined to the Negeb, and their contact and political agreement with the Philistines—are all indications of a mid-first millennium B.C. origin.

It is the primary purpose of this paper to examine some of these contentions. However, these contentions will be examined more from an interpretive standpoint than from the chronological standpoint, since it can be shown that in the long "continuity" of tradition in the ancient Near Eastern traditions, social custom, legal convention, or literary form are by themselves no sure means of chronological identification.

THE EXTENT OF PATRIARCHAL NOMADISM

Was Abraham a "nomad"? The Genesis account relates the movements of Abraham primarily in relation to two factors: the

nationale, Birmingham, England, July 8, 1976; cf. also his article, "The Royal Archives of Tell Mardikh-Ebla," The Biblical Archaeologist 39 (May 1976): 44-52. It is reported that these texts make reference to Canaan, Palestine, and Syria ca. 2300 B.C. Many place-names may prove to be local to Ebla, and the appearance of personal names such as "Abraham" can be paralleled in other cuneiform texts (cf. Thompson, The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives, pp. 22-36).
4 Van Seters, Abraham in History and Tradition, pp. 121-22.
5 Ibid.
divine call, and the divine land-grant to his posterity. Thus the ultimate destination is declared from the beginning when "Terah took Abram his son and Lot . . . and Sarai . . . and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldeans, to go into the land of Canaan" (Gen. 11:31). En route at Haran after Terah's death the renewed call is still for Abraham to leave "land, family, and father's house to go to the land I will show you" (Gen. 12:1).7 No details are given of the route, method, or time of travel. There is no reason to assume that a journey from southern Mesopotamia to Syro-Palestine was undertaken only by (semi-) nomads in antiquity. Movements in stages by groups of persons, possibly merchants, are attested by records of Old Babylonian itineraries.8

Gordon's suggestion that Ur (of the Chaldees) is to be identified with Ura' (modern Urfā' fifteen miles northwest of Haran)9 has been adequately answered by Saggs, who has stressed, in addition to the philological weakness, the unlikely nature of a move eastward by Abraham before retracing his steps toward Canaan.10 Moreover, Gordon's thesis, coupled with similarity of Old Babylonian place-names with patriarchal patronyms (e.g., Serug, Gen. 11:23; Turch [Terah] and Nahur [Nahor], Gen. 24:10) would still be evidence against van Seters' late date for such allusions. Moreover, emphasis is placed on the crossing of the Euphrates River ('Eber nari,' cf. Josh. 24:2-3).

Genesis places no stress on Abraham's "nomadism"; it merely states that he moved in response to the divine call from Haran to the land of Canaan, with no detail of that land which he crossed, to Shechem (Gen. 12:6). The route would have taken him through or near some of the city-states known to have dominated the region in both the second and first millennia B.C. At Moreh, near Shechem, Abram built an altar to the Lord after He in a theophany granted as a gift the land where he then was (Gen. 12:7). It is noteworthy that the first mention of "tents" is now made, and it is suggested that here (as subsequently near Bethel, Hebron, and at Beersheba) the tents indicate not so much his mode of living as a tent-shrine set up symbolically at places where he publicly avowed the promise

7 This is usually taken as an early source; it is quoted by Stephen (Acts 7:2-4).
of the land as a token of its take-over. A further journey to Bethel, near which another altar was erected and named in association with a "tent-site" (Gen. 12:8), was followed by a short journey southward. Following the diversion to Egypt due to famine (Gen. 12:10-20), Abraham returned to the promised land, to the previously occupied tent- and altar-site near Bethel (13:4).

Following the separation from Lot, which sprang from local Canaanite opposition and insufficiency of grazing for the flocks and herds, Abraham was given a further revelation about the extent of the land (Gen. 13:5-13). From a vantage point on high ground he was able to look north, south, east, and west at the covenant-promised territory before walking throughout its length and breadth (13:17; cf. Josh. 18:4-8), acting as one who already held title to it. The southward measurement was made by Abraham first; he moved to Mamre (13:18) where he stayed for some time (18:1). There a further theophany reaffirmed the possession of the land through an heir. Then he went further south between Kadesh and Shur (20:1) to stay in the land then dominated by Abimelech of Gerar (20:1-18) which bordered Beersheba. The latter was taken over and was marked as a special place by tent and altar and "sacred tree," to become the symbol of the southermmost part of the promised land stretching "from Dan to Beersheba." The references to "tents" used by Abraham's successors refer principally to these same sites except for the use of a tent by Lot prior to his establishing a permanent lodging in a house in Sodom (13:12; cf. 19:2) and of Jacob's inclusion of tents and camels in his caravan on the flight from Laban (31:28). He is described as staying "among the settlements ['tents, AV]" (Gen. 25:25) when his settled life is contrasted with the nomadic and hunting existence of Esau. Jacob himself settled in a house at Succoth (33:17).

These scant references to tents are not in themselves indicative of any special type of nomadism, even of the "enclosed nomadism" described by Rowton.

THE TYPE OF PATRIARCHAL NOMADISM

The Genesis picture is not specifically one of semi-nomadism though it could be compared in some features with the well-documented nomadism of Syria and the Upper Euphrates region in the

second millennium B.C. or with the even earlier activities of the Sutu (ca. 2700 B.C.) or Egyptian sswy. Some scholars, however, have tended to exaggerate the supposedly "nomadic" elements by reference to named groups in the same region at different periods (e.g., Amurru, Aramu) and to their sedentary condition by reference to the settled life of the same tribes.

Rowton has shown that long-range nomads, dependent on the limitations of the desert and rainfall, are rare and probably confined throughout history to north and south Arabia. They are distinct from the true self-sufficient long-range "external nomadism" of central Asia and central Arabia. The short-range semi-nomads engaged in pastoral nomadism, owning livestock and a few camels, and their migration might have involved tribal communities. Such combinations of camels, sheep, goats, and donkeys moved slowly and never more than a day's journey from water. They followed the seasons and interacted with the local market where their more sedentary brethren lived. For this reason there is no single term in the ancient Near Eastern texts for such people who could be designated by their role or settlement. The individual group with its family head or chief (abum, "father") and elders might be referred to by several names (e.g., Ubrabum, Yahrurum, Ammanum), which could denote the total group (e.g., Bene-Yamina = "Benjaminites"). Nomads and sedentary members of a single tribe linked the former to an urban base as has been suggested for Abraham and Nahur (Aram). The long continuity of this tradition can be illustrated from the traditional genealogies of the second millennium B.C. (Hammurapi); Assyria (King List); and Israel (Abraham

13 R. Giveon, Les bedouins shosou des documents egytiens (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971); also references are made to nomads in the Ebla texts.
15 So also Midian, Amalek, and Bene-Qedem, all Midianites (Moshe Anbar, "Changement thèses noms thèses tribus nomades dans la relation d'un même evenement," Biblica 49 [1968]: 221-32).
18 F. R. Kraus, Konige die in Zelten wohnnten (Amsterdam: N. V. Noord-Hollandsche Uirgevers Maarschappij, 1965); cf. Ebla text linking the "ancestor" Tudiya with the Duddia of Assur, a vassal of Ebrum of Ebla.
and Nahor, Gen. 22:20-24; 25:1-4). Such semi-nomads could become very influential and take over the government of an urban settlement.\(^\text{19}\)

The designation and characteristic functions of these groups varied but little over the centuries. The Amorites (Amurru -"westerners" centered on Jebel Biri) are first named in texts from Fara (ca. 2600 B.C.) and in a date formula of the reign of sar-kalli-sarri (2250 B.C.) and last as an ethnic group in Babylonia in the time of Ammisaduqa (ca. 1645 B.C.).\(^\text{20}\) The Habiru ('Apiru), though occasionally mentioned in Syria (Brak, Syria, ca. 2200 B.C.), Mari, and Alalah, are increasingly referred to as semi-nomads in the west from the seventeenth century B.C. They performed similar functions within the same general area as the Amorites and disappeared with the Hurrians about the thirteenth century. Opinions are divided as to whether these Hapiru (Egyptian 'prw) are to be equated with the Hebrew 'ibri(m) linguistically or in function, since Habiru designates a sociological phenomenon rather than an ethnic group.\(^\text{21}\)

The role of the semi-nomad is then taken up into the term Aramu (Aramean), though before the thirteenth century this is already used of a place-name in the Upper Euphrates (Naram-Sin, ca. 2350 B.C.) and at Mari, Alalah, Drehem, and Egypt.\(^\text{22}\) Van Seters' assumption that references to Arameans or to related groups must always portray first millennium B.C. background is therefore open to strong criticism. The designation Arabu (Arab) for semi-nomads in the Damascus area is first attested in Shalmaneser III's sixth year among the allies facing him at the Battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.) and thereafter is primarily used by the Assyrians in their rare references to rulers in northern Arabia. At this time the existence of the Assyrian provincial system precludes this from being taken as the background of the Abrahamic narratives.

It has been proposed that Amurru, (H)apiru, Aramu, and Arabu are to be understood as dialectical variants, used at different periods, of a term for "semi-nomad."\(^\text{23}\) Many attempts have been made to identify "Abram the Hebrew" (Gen. 14:13, ha'ibri) with the Habiru of their fellows; though lately it has been argued to be

\(^{19}\) E.g., the founders of second millennium dynasties: Naplanum at Larsa; Sumu-Abum at Babylon; Abd-i-Erah at Kish; and Yaggid-Lim at Mari.


\(^{23}\) Ibid., p. 135.
a denominative from Eber (Gen. 10:21), now equated by some with Ebrum king of Ebla ca. 2300 B.C. Others consider the references to the "Hebrew" slaves (Gen. 39:14, 17; Exod. 1:15-19; etc.) to indicate these semi-nomadic groups rather than an identifiable ethnic identification. However, there seems to be no logical requirement for taking either "Abram the Hebrew" or "the ancestor who was a roving Aramean" (Deut. 26:5, possibly Jacob) as late interpolations, in the light of the early and frequent occurrences of both terms.

While it may be argued that the designation "Abraham the Hebrew" accords with much of the traditions of the early semi-nomads or Habiru, there is no certainty as to the meaning of the word "Hebrew." Suggestions include "dusty ones" (epru); "providing/receiving subsidies" (eperu; 'pr); "transferred, without a stable habitat" (apr); "confederates" (ebru); "lord" (Hurr. ewri); or, more likely, "one who passes through, crosses territory" (eberu), i.e., a stranger who has left his country and crossed a frontier or "one who seeks a new means of existence after having lost his place in the old order of things." Though this last agrees with the Septuagint interpretation of Genesis 14:13, which describes Abraham as "the wanderer, the transient, he who passes through," it can be questioned whether this is in keeping with the stated life of the patriarch.

ABRAHAM AND THE PROMISE OF THE LAND

The references to Abraham in the land are primarily concerned with the land as promised to him by divine grant. This does appear to place the Genesis narratives outside the limited theme of any land which may be shown to have been inherited by semi-nomads (even though the form or structure of the narrative does show similarities with royal grants of land, as argued by Weinfeld).

While such grants might associate tribes with sedentary groups, Abraham is concerned not with his "nomadism" but with his status as a "(resident-) alien" \( (\text{ger}) \), and a landless one at that \( (\text{ger w\textsuperscript{w}tosab}) \). But this is when he is in Canaanite Kirjath-Arba bargaining for a burial place for Sarai (Gen. 23:4; cf. 37:1; 35:27).29 All other references to his status as a \textit{ger} refer to his temporary residence outside the land granted him by God -- when in Egypt (Gen. 12:10; cf. 15:13; 47:49), in Gerar (20:1; cf. 26:3), and in the territory of Abimelech (21:23-34). Lot is also called a \textit{ger} in Sodom (19:9), and Jacob is a \textit{ger} when in Laban's territory (23:4; cf. 28:4).

There is therefore no reason to think that Abraham considered himself only temporary, or merely a transient, or without rights, in the very land granted him by his God. In this lay the measure of his faith, in claiming \textit{de facto} and \textit{de jure} what had been promised by God \textit{de jure}. Hebrews 11:14, 16 certainly agrees with this interpretation, for there too the description of the great faith of this "resident-alien and exile" (cf. "strangers or passing travellers," NEB) lays stress on his settling, albeit as a foreigner, in the promised land (Heb. 11:9). This does not mean that he, like any man, was unaware of the transitory nature of life or of the temporary status of life on earth (cf. Ps. 39:12; 1 Chron. 29:15).

Abraham in
History and Tradition

Part II: Abraham the Prince

Donald J. Wiseman

In the previous article in this series it was suggested that Abraham's designation as "the Hebrew" marked him not as a semi-nomad, but as a resident-alien (גֵּר) newly arrived in the land, who took active and public steps to take possession of land granted him by divine covenant-promise. He was in effect taking over "by faith" the area known later as Judah.

ABRAHAM AS A POLITICAL LEADER

This leads to a study of his ascription as "Abraham the prince" (Gen. 23: 5, AV) or the רָעָם, a title given by a group of foreigners living among the Canaanites who also held land rights in the same region de facto. This was after Abraham had lived in the area for sixty-two years (cf. Gen. 12:4; 17:17; 23:1) when the "sons of Heth" (Hittites) under Ephron who owned the field and cave of Macpelah in a district of Canaan treated Abraham with respect as the head of a clan residing as their neighbors.

"We look on you as a mighty leader (ךְָּלָעַם רָעָם) among us" (Gen. 23:6), they said, and there is no hint that Abraham's dealings with them were unexpected, insincere, or contrary to accepted local

2 With the defeat of the coalition of kings near Damascus, Abraham would be regarded as succeeding them "as far as Dan" (Gen. 14:14), thus taking over the rest of the Promised Land.
3 Cf. Genesis 25:16 and Numbers 7. The title was later extended to the chief representatives of the Israelite tribes in state and religious groupings (Gen. 17:20; Num. 1:16; 1 Kings 8:1).
custom. Whether this phrase is taken as a superlative\(^4\) or as an acknowledgement of his affiliation to God ("a רֹאשׁ of God") by men of another religion,\(^5\) the use of the term רֹאשׁ clearly denotes a position of dignity and leadership.\(^6\) It is similarly used in early texts of the chiefs of the Midianites (Josh. 13:21; Num. 25:18) and Shechem (Gen. 34:2), which, with Edom, were all tribes involved in the promise made to Abraham (17:4-8). The title is later applied to David\(^7\) and Solomon (1 Kings 11:34) as to the chief political authority, comparable to the later "king" (מלך) (Exod. 22:28).

Moreover, the suggestion that the term may well include the idea of official selection by the people\(^8\) would be appropriate in a situation where ten named ethnic groups all lay claim to adjacent territory in the same area as that promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18-21).\(^9\) Such groups would normally make local alliances for defence as did Abraham during the time of the raid on Sodom by a covenant-association with Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner specified as part of the local "Amorites" (14:13, 21).\(^10\) By such an agreement the parties rendered themselves liable to provide forces to assist an injured colleague.\(^11\) That Abraham was the acknowledged leader on this occasion may also be shown by reference to them as dependent on Abraham's division of the spoil (14:24), and to him is attributed both the reception of the intelligence information and the military leadership in which his initiative and stratagem culminated in a surprise night attack resulting in complete victory.\(^12\) He was

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7 In applying the title to Edom (Ezek. 32:29) Ezekiel's preference may not necessarily be, as commonly suggested, because the kingship of Israel and Judah was insignificant (34:34) but rather may be a reversal to the earlier tradition of the title applied to persons in a subordinate position under a great king.
9 The "River of Egypt" is not the Wadi al Arish but is a wadi located nearer Gaza. The use of "rivers" to mark boundaries was common (cf. Josh. 1:4; Judges 4:13; 1 Kings 4:21).
acknowledged as leader of the group both by the king of Salem and by the king of Sodom and such leadership may not have resulted solely from his affinity to Lot whose cause he was espousing.

It was, however, not only those living within the bounds of the land promised to Abraham by the covenant land-grant who reacted to Abraham as the leader of the group occupying defined territory. Abraham is portrayed as the head of a substantial family group who had acquired possessions and dependents before entering Canaan (Gen. 12:5). He was a person of independent means, well able to provide for his family (cf. 24:22). His wealth was increased by gifts given by the king of Egypt (12:16, 20) so that he could be called "a very rich man" (13:2). The Hebrew דָּבָה here also denotes the honor and respect due to a man of high position, thus demonstrating that he was not simply a poor wanderer.

ABRAHAM'S STATUS BEFORE PHARAOH

Difficult though the episode in Egypt may be to interpret, Abraham was still held in awe by the royal household there even after the so-called "deception of an innocent pharaoh" was known (Gen. 12:10-20). A major Egyptian ruler would have dismissed an insignificant foreigner without recompense. This accords with the evidence of the attitude of other external rulers to him, and it may be questioned whether this really was the "low moral point" in his life or that the story was invented to show the "climax of God's intervention and deliverance in the face of Abraham's failure which thus accounts for its popularity." The act of going to Egypt for corn to save life is not of itself classed as a sign of lack of faith. It would appear to have been a deliberate and regular practice of Abraham while abroad to refer to Sarai as his "sister" (Gen. 12:14) and this could be related to his description of Lot, his nephew (11:34), as his "brother" (יָשָׁר; 14:14; cf. 13:8), which in the context could be "ally" -- a person in association with Abraham on a covenant basis who had been given, in effect, a preferential

14 Cf. Genesis 42:1; Egypt was commonly a place of escape from famine or opposition in Palestine (1 Kings 11:40; Matt. 2:13).
15 Genesis 29:12 is probably to be interpreted in a similar way rather than as "person of the same class" or status. Thomas L. Thompson, in The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974, p. 298), argues that the phrase in Genesis 14:4 is probably a priestly addition to make the story fit the "priestly" view of the relationship of Abraham and Lot. If this were so, a more exact kinship term would be expected (cf. Frances I. Andersen, "Israelite Kinship Terminology and Social Structure," Bible Translator 20 (1969): 29-39.
choice in the inheritance of the land as if he were a true eldest son (13:9-11, 15). Similarly, the use of "sister" for Sarai might have been intended to denote a special covenant relationship, as if she had independent rights and responsibilities which might be expected to be exercised in revenge if the life of the allied party was at risk, though being a woman, and a beauty, Abraham was well aware whose life was most at risk (12:11-14)! It is also possible that Abraham could have called Sarai his (half-)sister legally (20:12) on the parallel of the marriage of Abraham's brother Nahor to Milcah the daughter of Harran, another of his brothers (11:29). Any supposed parallel with Hurrian wife-sister marriages is to be rejected. Also any relationship with the ancient Egyptian practice of royal weddings between brother and sister is unlikely since this was confined to the Egyptians and there is no evidence here that a marriage between a king of Egypt and the sister of a suppliant ruler from south Palestine relates to any treaty arrangement. However, in view of the strong later tradition that Sarai was faithful to both her husband and his God (Isa. 51:2) it may be questioned whether this episode is yet adequately interpreted. For the present purpose it is sufficient to note that Abraham's status in the eyes of a powerful foreign king was such that he had to be adequately compensated and not simply expelled. Both Sarai and Abraham (Gen. 12:17) rightly rejected any association with Egypt.

16 E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964), pp. 78-79. It is also noteworthy that Abraham's son married the granddaughter of Abraham's brother, Nahor (Gen. 24:15), the difference in generation being accounted for by the advanced age of Abraham and Sarah at Isaac's birth. Such meticulous description would be unexpected if the composition of this chapter were as late as some suppose.


19 This was always between members of the same Egyptian royal family. Also treaty marriages involve the daughter of one party.


21 If taken as an example of a sin of Abraham this would be further evidence of an early rather than a late source for the tradition. In the latter it would have been explained in such a way as not to impugn the character of Abraham as a man of courage.
ABRAHAM'S STATUS BEFORE ABIMELECH

There is evidence too that another foreign ruler, Abimelech, king of Gerar "in the land of the Philistines," was prepared to deal with Abraham as one of equal status and to enter with him into a covenant-treaty which included provision of territorial rights (Gen. 20: 15). It is more likely that this was conceived as an inter-state relationship rather than an inter-individual relationship since, when the terms were considered to have been broken by Abimelech's unwitting action over Sarah, the divine curses which guarded such agreements were thought to fall not merely on Abimelech as an individual but on his city-state (20:7, 9) and the penalties to be paid publicly are duly prescribed (20:16). The solemn agreement made by Abimelech and his army commander with Abraham bears the hallmarks of an ancient parity treaty which included provisions whereby the parties had to keep each other informed of transgression of border or well rights (21:26-27). Once again Abimelech's fear of Abraham is brought out by the clauses prohibiting the latter's interference with his dynasty or his kingdom which he must have envisaged as in Abraham's power to do (21:22-23). This may be further evidence of Abraham being already thought of as representing a group of "state-equivalents." It is unlikely that Abraham is here treated as of "vassal" status and he would therefore have demanded at least equivalent terms. The treaty-covenant, customarily envisaged as enduring for the foreseeable future, remained in force at least until its ratification in the time of Isaac (26:28-29) and possibly until the time of Samson (Judg. 13:1).

Exception has been taken by some to the mention of "Philistines" in the patriarchal period (Gen. 21:32, 34; 26:1, 8, 14-18). These references are classed as anachronisms since, it is argued, these sea-peoples did not settle in southwest Palestine until ca. 1200 B.C. when they resided in a pentapolis led by lords (דנינים). However, it should be noted that contacts between the Aegean sea-

22 The omission of the weight in "a thousand pieces [shekels] of silver" (Gen. 20: 16) was common in sources earlier than the late Middle Babylonian period, as was the qualification "of the merchants" (Bab. sa damgarim) of Genesis 23:16.
24 Further study is needed on the time-duration envisaged by all covenant-transactions. Note the "forever" in divine covenants (Gen. 3:22, Adam; 13:15, Abraham; Deut. 11:1, Moses; 2 Sam. 7:13, David; etc.).
peoples and Palestine in the Middle Bronze Age are attested. Crete (Kaptar, Heb. קפריסיה), which was their place of origin or transit, is mentioned in Egyptian and Marl texts of the early second millennium, and Middle Minoan II pottery is found at Hazor, Ugarit, and in Egypt. Further, the Philistines are usually noted in Egyptian texts ca. 1200 B.C., together with other sea-peoples (Kreti = Cherethites) and the Genesis references could well be to "Philistines" used in a confederate sense. It is by no means unlikely that in the prevailing situation of mixed ethnic groups some Philistines should settle south of Gaza around Gerar and be under a "king" and thus have been there already long enough to bear a mixture of Semitic (Abi-melek, Ahuzzat) and non-Semitic (Phicol, possibly Anatolian) personal names and to conclude treaties according to formulae and procedures long attested throughout the ancient Near East.

ABRAHAM AS A GOVERNOR

The status of Abraham can be examined further, for it may not be without significance that Abraham as a leader (יהוה) undertook the responsibilities normally associated with the ruler of a small state or with that of a provincial governor appointed by a great king. The role of the latter in the second millennium B.C. is reasonably well known from the Mari correspondence. His title sapitum (Heb. ספיר) denotes "the one who governs" on behalf of the supreme ruler who has given him the office. Such a person was customarily addressed as "lord," being a superior person of dignity (as Abraham was addressed by the Hittites, Gen. 23: 6, 11, 15) who worked through a chief steward who had wide administrative powers (as did Abraham through Eliezer, Gen. 15:2). The office and title of sapitum occurs in the Ebla texts ca. 2300 B.C. and appears to be the form perpetuated in Palestine in the time of the regional "governors" (a better translation than "judges," Judg. 2: 16-18). The latter, like Abraham, were held to be sub-governors

29 Compare the treaty between Ebrum of Ebla with Duddiya of Assur ca. 2300 B.C.
31 Giovanni Pettinato to Donald J. Wiseman, July 8, 1976.
acknowledging the Lord God as "the supreme Governor of all the earth" (Gen. 18:25; cf. Judg. 11:27). The extent of the governorship varies according to local requirements and conditions, though it was always geographically defined.32 In exercising their responsibilities some governors worked through local chiefs (abu bitim = "father of the house" [clan]), who could administer territories in the name of the local king or deity.33 Provincial governors were usually granted lands by the overlord for their maintenance in lieu of salary. This may have significance for understanding the full purpose of the divine land-grant made to Abraham and his successors. The responsibilities and duties of the governors differed little from those of the local city-state rulers, who were occasionally employed in a similar role.34 These included the following:

**MAINTAINING ORDER**

Using limited local forces, including mercenaries, the governor had to maintain law and order within his designated area. Similar action is reflected in Abraham's action with the men of Bethel and Ai (Gen. 13:7), and at Beersheba in the border dispute with Gerar (21:25). As at Mari, he also had to deal with cases of involuntary deportation. Abraham's employment of his 318 MykynH together with men supplied by his allies to recover Lot (14:14, 24) falls within this category.35

**EXERCISING JUSTICE**

The governor as "judge" would act on behalf of the great king in local decisions, especially matters of land disputes (cf. Gen. 13:7). As judge he would sit alone or in the gate with the local elders (cf. 23:10). This role is clearly seen in the express responsibility laid on Abraham to order his family and "clan-group" to follow him in "keeping the way of the LORD" by "exercising justice and law" (18:19). Righteousness (זקנון) and judgment (hiswm) mark both the ideal (divine) role of God as the supreme Ruler as also it should those to whom He gives such responsibilities as His subgovernors. They themselves will be judged according to their fulfillment of the revealed divine standard. Here "the way of the

33 A. Marzal, "The Provincial Governor at Mari," p. 213.
34 Ibid., p. 202 (piqittum).
35 The "trained retainers" (Gen. 14:14) were probably of Egyptian origin. If so, this would also illustrate the use of "mercenaries" for guard duties as attested in texts of all periods.
LORD" (18:19, a rare singular; cf. Judg. 2:22; 2 Kings 21:22; Prov. 10:29; Isa. 40:3; Ezek. 18:29) may stand for the unified concept of law later indicated by Torah. The implementation of righteousness calls for its application in every aspect of life, individually and collectively in both legal, economic, and religious affairs which were considered indivisible. The emphasis here is on the administration of the law including customary law (מְזַמְר). The maintenance of justice, distinguishing between right and wrong, was an aspect of governorship as it is of every man's life which is continually being assessed by God.

COLLECTING TAXES AND TRIBUTE

The collection of dues and the forwarding of them to a higher authority was a time-consuming work for any governor. This included any payments made to the local cult-center whose maintenance was also his concern. There he would be present when an oath before the god was taken when a new official was appointed or a local covenant or agreement was ratified. Both these aspects may be seen in the incident of Melchizedek. If the words, "he gave him a tithe of everything" (Gen. 14:20), are interpreted as Abraham giving a tenth of the spoil to the priest-king of Salem in recognition of the identity of El Elyon with Yahweh (as traditionally interpreted according to Heb. 7:4, 10), it requires that emphasis be placed on Abraham dedicating something that was not his alone. Otherwise, it would seem to contradict Genesis 14:22-24. Elsewhere references to Melchizedek refer to the eternal nature of his royal priesthood.

Also the tenth (דְּנֵי) is often, but not invariably, used of a sacred payment and compared with the מִקָּם used of a levy on war spoils (Num. 31:28). It is unlikely, though grammatically possible, that Genesis 14:20 could refer to the king of Salem giving Abraham a tithe as to his acknowledged superior. It is to be noted that in Babylonian texts the tithe (esirtu, esretu) is used of a levy.
paid on goods in transit (miksu) (and by the later first millennium it was used of a tax on field produce, which cannot apply here).\(^{41}\)

Genesis 14 has been the subject of much discussion, with the Melchizedek incident (14:18-20) regarded as secondary and interrupting the narrative.\(^{42}\) Subjective analysis of the literary style has resulted in varying attributions and dating of the sources.\(^{43}\) Yet to conclude as some do that "consideration of Genesis 14 has generally been given up as historical"\(^{44}\) or that the chapter "appears as an erratic block and is more a hindrance than a help to the historian"\(^{45}\) is to overlook the inadequacies of any attempt to blend the so-called "heroic" elements with "historiographic" passages.\(^{46}\) For the present it needs to be stressed that Genesis 14 does not demand a symbolic interpretation whereby Abraham is shown as confronting "a world empire."\(^{47}\) Abraham is described in terms which accord with the early second millennium and do not fit in with our present knowledge of the later periods as sometimes proposed for the chapter. For example, the Genesis 14 incident would hardly have been meaningful or feasible after 1000 B.C. and certainly not after the reformation of the provincial system in Syria and southward carried out by Tiglath-pileser III in 740-734 B.C.\(^{48}\) It is possible that the role of Melchizedek was primarily that of mediator between Abraham and the king of Sodom at a ceremony concerning the settlement and division of the spoils, the bread and wine being symbols commemorating the conclusion of treaty-covenants.\(^{49}\) Abraham publicly declared that he would not take anything of the spoils for himself but assured the recovery of Lot's possessions (cf. 14:16) and the share of the spoils for Abraham's allies, with the women and children returned to Sodom as requested.

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43 From an early historical source to P, JE, or D to a late Jewish Midrash (Emerton, Abraham in History and Tradition, pp. 407-25).
44 Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, p. 186.
ACQUIRING INFORMATION

The governor was also involved through agents in commercial activity, and such may be reflected in a few of the indications from which it was once argued that Abraham was a merchant-prince.\(^{50}\) In this activity a governor would acquire knowledge of activities in bordering territories, especially of events which might effect internal security. He had to keep his superior power informed of these, as of the passage of foreigners and messengers through his area. It was on this basis that Abraham intervened on behalf of oppressed loyal ("righteous") subjects. In his plea before the great "Governor of all lands" (Gen. 18:22-33) Abraham is likewise concerned not only with the impending action to be taken against Sodom (which is justified on the grounds of rebellion against the great King and the justice He requires) but also with the fate of the members of his own family-group for which he was responsible.

PROVIDING HOSPITALITY

In furthering his responsibilities as a whole, a governor had to provide accommodations for (and to welcome the" escorts of) his visiting king, foreigners of note, and any important dignitaries who might pass through his territory.\(^{51}\) This lies behind Abraham's entertainment of the three men at his principal base at Mamre (18:1-21). The aged patriarch treated his visitors with the respect due to those he would recognize as his superiors ("my lord," Gen. 18:3, 27, 30-31), especially to their leader. He provided the two messengers with information, an escort, and probably provisions when he "went with them to set them on their way" (18:16).

SUMMARY

This outline study has sought to suggest that Abraham, while ruling his own family and house, acted as a princely ruler and leader exercising the equivalent functions of a respected governor owing allegiance in all matters to the great King. In this he stands in direct succession to the kingly role of Adam and as a true predecessor to Moses and David. There is nothing inconsistent in the Abrahamic narratives which demands, as some would suggest, that this is a late interpretation of the patriarch's role.


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SCHOLIA

RECENT TRANSLATIONS OF GENESIS 3:15

MARTEN H. WOUDSTRA

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH has always rightly regarded God's words spoken to the serpent in paradise as constituting the first glimmer of salvation, the proto-evangelium. This understanding of Gen. 3:15 has not gone unchallenged. Some modern Old Testament theologians take sharp issue with it. Says Gerhard von Rad: "The exegesis of the early church which found a messianic prophecy here, a reference to a final victory of the woman's seed (Protevangelium), does not agree with the sense of the passage, quite apart from the fact that the word 'seed' may not be construed personally but only quite generally with the meaning 'posterity,' " (Comm. on Genesis [Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1961], p. 90).

Quite a different challenge to the traditional Christian understanding of this passage comes from the side of the newer Bible translations. A comparison of these translations demonstrates a significant margin of uncertainty with respect to the actual words God spoke to the serpent. The intent of this brief study is not to discuss the entire prophecy contained in Gen. 3:15 but to offer a critical comparison of the various recent translations offered. The logic for this type of comparison is obvious. If the church is going to continue to regard these words as a broadly messianic promise it should be reasonably sure as to what it is that is being promised. It is at this point that the variety of English renderings enters in. Which one of the several offered shall the interpreter choose?

Variant translations of Gen. 3:15 are by no means a phenomenon of recent origin. Already the Septuagint rendered the word shuph, traditionally understood as "bruise" or "crush," by quite a different word, meaning to guard or to watch. The Vulgate chose two different words, respectively describing what the woman's seed would do to the serpent and what the serpent would do to the woman's seed. The first word, conterere, means "to crush," while the second word, insidiari, means "to lie in
wait." The fact is also well known that the LXX chose to render the Hebrew pronoun ἡμῖν with αὐτός, making it a masculine, whereas the Hebrew does not demand anything more than a neuter. The Vulgate, on the other hand, rendered this same pronoun with the feminine ipsa, thus giving support to a mario-
logical understanding.

The purpose of the following comparison of translations is primarily to localize the problem-areas which the translator con-
fronts. The scope of this scholion will not permit a full-fledged discussion and resolution of these problems.

Here, then, is a listing of some of the representative trans-
lations of Gen. 3:15:

**ASV**  And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise (mg. note: lie in wait for) thy head, and thou shalt bruise (mg. note idem) his heel.

**RSV**  Essentially the same, minus the notes.

**American Translation**  I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your posterity and hers; They shall attack you in the head, And you shall attack them in the heel.

**JB**  I will make you enemies of each other you and the woman, your offspring and her offspring.
It will crush your head and you will strike its heel.

**NEB**  I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your brood and hers. They shall strike at your head, and you shall strike at their heel.

**NAB**  I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel.

**Zurcher Bible**  Und ich will Feindschaft setzen zwischen dir and dem Weibe and zwischen deinem Nachwuchs and ihrem Nachwuchs; er wird dir nach dem Kopfe treten, and du wirst ihm nach der Ferse schnappen.
Dutch New Version

En Ik zal vijandschap zetten tussen u en de vrouw, en tussen uw zaad en haar zaad; dit zal u den kop vermorzelen, en gij zult bet den hiel vermorzelen.

Swedish of 1917

Och jag skall satta fiendskap mellan dig och kvinnan, och mellan din sad och henries sad. Denna skall sondertrampa ditt huvud, och du skall stinga den i halen.

The following problem areas emerge from this comparison.

1. How to render the word *zera* (seed), traditionally translated "seed."  
2. What pronoun to use to refer to the agent which will "bruise" the serpent's head.  
3. Is "bruise" (or "crush") the best word to use here? A subsidiary question is whether the same word should be used for both activities, that of the woman's seed toward the serpent and vice versa.

Let us tabulate the results on the basis of this threefold division.

As to (1): Most translations have abandoned the literal translation "seed," probably for reasons of clarity. Substitutes are: "posterity," "offspring," "brood." The Dutch and Swedish retain "seed."

As to (2): At this point the range of translations includes "he," "they," and "it." (Knox, following the Vulgate has "she.")

As to (3): Some translations keep "bruise" in both instances (RSV and DNV). Some substitute an identical other word in both instances: "lie in wait," ASV margin; "attack," American; "strike at," NEB and NAB. A third group uses two different words for the two activities respectively: "crush" and "strike" (JB) ; "treten nach" and "schnappen nach" (ZB) ; "sondertrampa" and "stinga" (Swedish).

At this point I wish to append a few brief comments with regard to each of these three translation problems.

*Translation Problem One: How to render the Hebrew zera* - The substitution of the word "seed" by a more modern word such as "offspring," or "brood," offers no great difficulty. While regular Bible readers are used to the word "seed" this word is
certainly not current in the English language of today as a designation of offspring.

The real question at this point is whether the word \textit{zera} is meant to convey the idea of offspring, or at least whether or not this is the sole intent of the word as used here. The answer to this question depends on several other considerations which can only be mentioned very briefly within the compass of this discussion. The first consideration concerns the parties to the conflict which is here foretold. The narrator of Genesis 3 clearly suggests the presence of an actual snake in the story of the temptation. He compares this "serpent" with all the other beasts of the field which the Lord had made. Focussing on this aspect first of all, the question should be faced: does the word \textit{zera} indicate the "offspring," or "brood" of snakes?

The Lexicon informs us that the Old Testament uses \textit{zera} very infrequently for the offspring of animals. One instance given by B.D.B. is that presently under discussion. One other instance listed is Gen. 7:3, but this passage is hardly a convincing illustration of the point at issue. The purpose for taking the animals into the ark was not actually to keep their offspring alive. This offspring was not yet present at the time these words were spoken. How could it have been kept alive in the ark? Some modern translations have sensed this problem and have avoided the word "seed" or "offspring" altogether at this point: RSV, "to keep their kind alive"; JB, "to propagate their kind." I believe that an appeal to Gen. 7:3 to prove that \textit{zera} occasionally is used as "offspring" in the case of animals is not a strong one.

Another point to be considered is whether the story of the fall suggests the presence of more than a mere animal. If the story does suggest the presence of a demonic force acting behind and through the snake, how does this affect the question of the meaning of \textit{zera}? As to the presence of a force other than a mere animal in man's temptation, I believe that as one reads Genesis 3 one does indeed become conscious of such a force. There is a diabolical subtlety in the serpent's suggestions which points to a sinister background to his words. Later Scripture abundantly confirms this opinion. It should be clear that the presence of a demonic agent in the temptation very definitely affects the
question of how to understand \textit{zera}^c. The Bible nowhere suggests that demons can have offspring in the sense of progeny or posterity. When, nevertheless, the word \textit{zera}^c is used with respect to the serpent it must, when Satan is in view, have a non-literal meaning. As such this poses no great problem. It only points to the complexity of the meaning of \textit{zera}^c: literal "offspring" in the case of the woman, probably also with respect to the serpent, although there the evidence is less clear, and finally a non-literal use of \textit{zera}^c when applied to the one whom the serpent represented as spokesman.

There is still another use of the word \textit{zera}^c which may have played a role at this point. One definition given by B.D.B. of \textit{zera}^c is: "seed as marked by moral quality = persons (or community) of such a quality." Passages listed include Prov. 11:21; Jer. 2:21; Mal. 2:15; Is. 1:4; cf. Is. 65:23; 61:9; 65:9. Newer translations have captured this aspect of the word \textit{zera}^c quite admirably. Thus Prov. 11:21b is rendered by JB as follows: "but the race of the virtuous will come to no harm" (lit.: the \textit{zera}^c of the virtuous). RSV renders the same phrase simply: "but those who are righteous will be delivered." Similarly JB translates Is. 65:23 as follows: "for they will be a race blessed by Yahweh, and their children with them." This passage makes quite clear that the word \textit{zera}^c may be distinguished from "offspring" (ASV renders: "for they are the seed of the blessed of Jehovah, and their offspring with them").

If this meaning of \textit{zera}^c would play any role at all in Gen. 3:15 then one might, while retaining something of the "offspring" notion, understand the two "seeds" to stand for two "races," two "communities," each marked by a moral quality. These communities are headed up by two distinct principals, the one principal being the woman, the other the serpent, each of which had just been set at enmity with the other by God himself. Upon this view both of these "seeds" could be found among the children of men. This would then alleviate the difficulty of having to take the word literally in the one instance and figuratively in the other.

\textit{Translation Problem Two: How to render the pronoun hu'}.--
In the Hebrew text this pronoun refers back to \textit{zera}^c, which is a
masculine word. Thus the masculine hu' could simply be explained in this sense. Since in English the word "seed" is neuter one could defend the choice of "it" as a translation for hu'. This is the way the King James Version rendered it, though both ASV and RSV use "he." The Dutch New Version retains "it." This reflects the ambiguity of the original and, in a certain sense therefore, might be called a good translation.

However, the rendering "he" has also some very ancient and venerable support. The Septuagint chose that word (Greek: autos). This choice is all the more remarkable since the Greek, in distinction from the Hebrew, has a choice of masculine, feminine, and neuter. The Greek word for "seed" (sperma) being a neuter, the Septuagint could have followed this up with a neuter (auto). Apparently it felt the personal reference at this point to be strong enough to choose autos instead. And, indeed, something of the personal next to the collective does play a role in this passage.

But grammatically the pronoun hu' refers back to zera'. Since zera', whether taken as "community," "race," or as "offspring," involves a plurality, the translation "they" can certainly be defended. It need not detract from the broadly messianic understanding of the passage, though the Septuagint rendering would clearly make this understanding much more explicit. But the Old Testament arrives only gradually at the idea of a personal Messiah.

It is possible, of course, that the choice of the plural pronoun "they" in some of the modern versions proceeds from a view which is incompatible with the understanding of this passage as a protevangelium. However we cannot be sure of motivations. The mere choice of the plural pronoun is not impossible grammatically and can be combined with the broadly messianic understanding of the passage, the singular being comprised within the plural. Even the NEB, which chooses to use "they," cannot get around the reference to "your head" and "you," both singulars, when spoken of the serpent. In other words, it is the head of the serpent, not that of his zera', which is in view here. And again, it is the serpent, not his zera' which will "bruise" the heel of the woman's zera'.
Another thing of importance to note at this point is the fact that the Hebrew, by using the independent personal pronoun hu', thereby kept the verb forms of "to bruise" in the singular. There would have been the possibility, consistent with other Hebrew usage, of following the singular zera' with a plural verb form. Such usage is quite common when it comes to collectives such as zera'. But the use of hu', in itself not necessary in an ordinary Hebrew predicate, served to place emphasis on the basic unity underlying the plurality.

**Translation Problem Three: How to render "shuph"?** - This question has several aspects. (1) Should a relatively weak word be used, such as "strike at," or a stronger one, such as "crush"? (2) Should one and the same word be used for what the woman's "seed" does to the head of the serpent and for what the serpent will do to the heel of the woman's "seed"? (3) What is the exact meaning of shuph? (4) What is the temporal scope of the activity here envisaged in the context of the divine pronouncements upon man, woman, and serpent?

None of these questions can be treated in complete isolation from any of the others. Perhaps we might start by calling attention to the relatively heavy emphasis which the passage places on the idea of "enmity." This word, by virtue of its forward position in the Hebrew sentence, a position which interrupts somewhat the normal flow of the Hebrew sentence structure, indicates the true purpose of the divine deliverance at this point. It would seem that the conclusion is warranted that the emphasis was placed not so much, or at least not in the first place, on the victory gained in this conflict, but on the fact of the conflict itself and on the way in which this conflict was to express itself as long as it lasted.

If this should be the correct understanding of the passage's chief intent, the choice of a weaker word as a translation of shuph would not be out of place. The purpose of the passage, upon this assumption, would not primarily be to describe the outcome of the conflict but rather the way in which this conflict was to express itself as long as it lasted. In this connection it can easily be seen that if "crush" were to be chosen for what would happen to the head of the serpent and if this crushing blow
were to be linked with Christ's victory over the devil at the cross, then, in terms of this passage at least, the enmity of which it speaks could no longer be exercised. One of the combatants would have been knocked out. Yet, as was noted, it was this enmity and its mutual expression in terms of the Hebrew verb *shuph* that was made to stand out in this passage.

The problem confronting us here could easily be solved if the meaning of this Hebrew word was itself unambiguously clear. On this point there is no unanimity among Biblical expositors. Hengstenberg, *(Christology*, I, p. 26) confidently asserts that the verb in the other two O.T. passages where it occurs "undeniably signifies: ‘to crush,’ ‘to bruise.’" Von Rad, in his commentary *ad loc.*, states: "Philologically the verb *shuph* cannot be explained satisfactorily." The current Hebrew lexicons appear to support this latter contention. Even this does not settle all questions, but it should be kept in mind.

As was noted above, the choice of a weaker word for the activity by which the enmity expresses itself is not of recent origin. The Vulgate used *insidiaberis* for what the serpent was going to do to the seed of the woman. And the Septuagint used *tereoo* (watch, guard) in both instances. Similar approaches can be found in the modern versions. The lexicons suggest that, while in both instances the word *shuph* is used, its meaning in the second instance may be closer to the Hebrew *sha'aph* (gasp, pant after). This may well be the reason why the translation "lie in wait" (ASV, margin) has been chosen as an alternative (cf. also the Vulgate: *insidiaberis*).

In view of the relative obscurity of the meaning of *shuph* and in view of other considerations, such as the scope and intent of the passage, the translation "strike at," as found in both NEB and NAB should be given serious consideration. One obvious advantage of this rendering is that it maintains, also in English, the parallelism found in the Hebrew. One and the same word is used for both activities. This translation also removes the difficulty, experienced by some interpreters, of how to conceive of the attack of a snake upon a man's heel in terms of "crushing." These are definite advantages.

Are there any disadvantages? Is the Christian understanding of this verse impaired by the suggested rendering? The first
answer to this question should be that it is ultimately the sense of a given passage of Scripture itself that determines what should be its "Christian" understanding. But in the second place, in view of what was noted above about the prominence given to the notion of enmity, and also in view of the fact that this first "glimmer of salvation" stands at the beginning of man's journey through time as God's fallen creature, the use of the verb "strike at" appears well suited to express the thought God had in mind. Would it not be in keeping with the nature of the scene that God, at this early point in redemptive history, was looking forward not in the first place to its midpoint, the cross, but rather that he announced a condition which would prevail from the beginning of that history to its very end? And if so, would not a milder term such as "strike at," be preferable? This is not to deny the crucial significance of Christ's death on the cross as a definitive blow to Satan's power. Yet, as is well known from passages such as Rev. 12:13 and 17, the devil's power is still to be reckoned with. This aspect could be more easily explained in terms of Gen. 3:15 if the verse did not have in mind primarily what would happen when Christ died on the cross, even though that too would be one very significant instance of the "enmity" and of the way in which this enmity expresses itself.

What should also be noted in this connection is that the surrounding context seems to suggest a situation which reaches as far as the horizon of time. The snake's curse, woman's childbirth in pain, man's work in the sweat of his face, these are conditions that are coextensive with mankind's history short of consummation. Would it be strange if, in this setting, the Lord had spoken of a perennial and sustained enmity, set and maintained by him, which was to last as long as time would last? And would not that be another reason why a rendering such as "strike at" would have much to commend itself?

It has been frequently pointed out that since in the one instance the head is affected and in the other "only" the heel, this passage should be taken as an unambiguous indication of future success and victory on the part of the woman's seed. But others have countered by saying that the relative position of the two combatants, man and snake, make the use of these two modes of attack inevitable. But is a snake bite, even when aimed at
the lowly heel, meant to be any less lethal than when a man strikes at a serpent's head?

If the above approach to this problem should commend itself, does it mean that this passage is devoid of the gospel which the Christian church has found in it? I do not think so. The mere fact of God's "setting" of the enmity is a tremendous initiative for good, unexpected and unmerited. Man's alignment with the forces of evil is broken through. And, though upon this approach this passage does not explicitly predict ultimate victory of the woman's seed, nevertheless the One who set the enmity might also be regarded as implicitly guaranteeing the ultimate success of those who are on his side. Although much remains yet to be said in later revelations, what is being said is of such significance that the term "protevangelium" may be rightly used to describe it.

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THE OCCURRENCE of a system of ten toledot-divisions throughout the book of Genesis has long had the attention of Old Testament scholars. These toledot, translated "generations" in the American Standard Version, occur in Gen. 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1, 11:10 and 27; 25:12 and 19; 36:1 (and 9); 37:2.

In recent years Professor Donald J. Wiseman, disagreeing with both the standard documentary hypothesis and the oral tradition approach to the Pentateuch, has developed the thesis that the toledot in Genesis are evidence of the fact that at the time of Moses' writing activities written texts were already available in great abundance. Calling attention to the colophons or catch phrases which are used as titles of ancient texts, Wiseman expresses the opinion that the phrase "these are the generations of..." is such a colophon, identifying texts used by Moses, the inspired author, in setting forth the history of God's dealing with the line of promise (cf. Bulletin of Westminster Theological Seminary, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1969).

The present writer's interest in the possible significance of these toledot for the development of the line of promise was first aroused by the lectures which the late Professor B. Holwerda presented in 1946 at Kampen Theological Seminary in the Netherlands. Professor Holwerda then lectured on the "generations" of Isaac (Gen. 25:19). Unfortunately, Professor Holwerda's views were available only to Dutch readers until a few years ago. But in 1964 Dr. Samuel R. Kulling, professor of Old Testament at the Prediger Seminar in Sankt Chrischona near Basel, in a study entitled Zur Datierung Der "Genesis-P-Stucke" (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1964) made these views available in the German language as well. Moreover, in a commentary on the first few chapters of Genesis written by Professor W. H. Gispen of the Free University of Amsterdam the views of Professor Holwerda have again found further endorsement (Schepping en Paradijs [Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1966]). A brief summary of Professor Holwerda's views would seem to be called for in a
journal in the English language, primarily because of the intrinsic value which these views possess.

What will be presented in the following lines will be Kulling's discussion of Professor Holwerda's views, set within the framework of what other Old Testament scholars have held with regard to this matter.

Julius Wellhausen, followed by Budde, believed that the occurrence of these toledot-formulas was added proof for his thesis that the so-called P document was a late and schematic construction imposed on the materials of the Pentateuch. But B. D. Eerdmans observed that the schematism of the toledot was not as great as had been supposed and that this lack of complete uniformity argued against the Wellhausen thesis. One difficulty from the critical point of view is the occurrence of a toledot-formula in Gen. 2:4. The critics belonging to the Wellhausen school hold that this toledot is really out of place. It should have been written ahead of the materials presented in Gen. 1:1-2:3. Eichrodt correctly observed that no amount of exegetical art could ever explain why a formula that should have been used as a superscription ended up as a postscript instead. But, thus Eichrodt, if Gen. 2:4a stands where it stood originally, this has its consequences for our opinions on the question of whether the toledot are an evidence of P's supposedly very schematic procedure (cf. Kulling, p. 217). Noth has sought to explain this strange phenomenon as a literary exception, but Kulling correctly remarks that in the other nine instances the toledot heads the section to which it belongs. But this the Wellhausen critics have not been able to admit with respect to Gen. 2:4a. For they believe that Gen. 2:4a belongs to P, but Gen. 2:4b ff. belongs to J.

W. H. Green has called attention to other instances in which the theory of the Wellhausen school about the toledot as evidence for a late P construction does not apply. For in Gen. 37:2 the toledot introduces a section composed out of J and E materials. Also in 25:19 the toledot is followed by long sections out of J, mixed with E materials, with only an occasional reference to P materials. Eissfeldt believes that Gen. 36:10-39, one of the toledot, belongs to a source called "L." Kulling therefore raises
the question: if these *toledot* can stand at such places in other parts of the book of Genesis, why not then in Gen. 2:4a? But if, in spite of all this, we must still count this formula as belonging to P, this document then becomes discontinuous (luckenhaft), and it does not possess the systematic character which the critics say it has.

For all these reasons various solutions have been proposed concerning the origin and significance of these particular formulas. Some have held that there is no particular connection between them and that they are of various origins. There never was a P narrator document (Kulling, p. 219).

Another proposed solution has been the suggestion that these *toledot* formulas originated with a glossator who wanted to underscore the genealogical structure of Genesis but who proceeded without due care or consistency and who inserted the formula at times at the wrong place. Eichrodt endorses this position by asserting that the later redactor who inserted the *toledot* was attempting to divide the historical narrative by means of these formulas but that he was not successful in this attempt so that at a later point he gave it up. A still later redactor added a few more of his own. To the first editorial sequence belong 5:1; 10:1; 11:10 and 27; 25:12; 36:1. Here the phrase occurs in its proper sense. The second editorial sequence comprises the rest, namely 2:4a; 6:9; 25:19; 37:2. At these points the phrase has assumed a more figurative meaning. Editor number two also inserted 36:9, using the phrase again in its proper sense. Thus far Eichrodt’s opinion (Kulling, p. 220).

From these and other opinions Kulling concludes that to assume that the *toledot* are not original where they now stand is to avoid the question of their present order. Why did these supposed editors insert the phrases where they did? Why presuppose that these editors lacked the necessary insight and consistency?

A third solution concerning the use of the *toledot* in Genesis comes from Eissfeldt. Eissfeldt assigns these formulas to the original P document. He observes that they occur at points in the narrative which describe a certain narrowing down of the
scene of action. This gradual narrowing, which can be readily seen from the study of the successive toledot passages, is illustrated by Eissfeldt—who, by the way, also includes Num. 3:1 in his discussion. Eissfeldt believes that Gen. 2:4a does not hail from P, neither does Gen. 36:9 (nor 36:1). Kulling draws certain conclusions from this which are significant for the point of his argument but need not be recorded at this point. Kulling agrees with Eissfeldt that the toledot materials are the result of a conscious literary planning. But, so Kulling, this planning should not be restricted to a supposed P document; it should include the entire scope of the book of Genesis.

Having come to this point, Kulling reviews the opinion of Professor Holwerda. Admitting that the three solutions just recorded each contain some correct elements, Kulling observes that Holwerda has correctly understood that the toledot must be seen as integral to the larger context. In agreement with Holwerda, he views these formulas as providing us with the key to the understanding of the entire book.

The word toledot comes from the root yalad, "to bear," "to generate." It refers to the product of bearing; hence it stands for that which was produced, for the result. In Gen. 2:4 the word designates the historical result. Holwerda wishes to avoid the translation "history," which, in his opinion, does not always fit the true meaning of the word (cf. for this Gispen, p. 109, who, while agreeing with the thesis of Holwerda and Kulling, nevertheless knows no better translation for the word than "history"). Holwerda therefore understands Gen. 2:4 to say: this is what came forth from, this is what became of, heaven and earth. Holwerda does not feel that the word "history" is an appropriate translation here. What follows Gen. 2:4 is not really the story of heaven and earth but the story of Adam and Eve, the fall into sin, and the story of Cain and Abel.

In the word toledot, therefore, we find the meaning: this is what came of it. And in the genitive ("these are the toledot of...") we have the thought: this is where it started from. The word toledot indicates the end of a line; the added genitive marks a new starting point. To say what Eissfeldt did, namely, that the toledot serve to restrict the scene of action, does not
really do justice to the meaning of this term. It does not make clear why, for example, there is no toledot of Abraham while there is one of Terah, the father of Abraham. Terah's toledot has Abraham for its center; similarly Isaac's toledot (Gen. 25:19) has Jacob for its center; and Jacob's toledot places Joseph in the foreground.

To observe the true meaning of this phrase also helps us see the actual purpose of the biblical narratives. These narratives are not biographies; they are not novels concerning saints, although we often make this out of them. The Bible does not present histories of people; it contains no biographies; but it draws lines from a starting point to an end point. If it were otherwise, we should have had a toledot of Abraham and of Joseph, but we look in vain for such. Another consequence of this understanding of the toledot is that it cuts out all psychologizing about various "types of faith."

The author of Genesis, therefore, is concerned to show where the ways begin to part: for example, with Terah, and then again with Ishmael (25:12-18), with Isaac (25:19-35:29), with Esau (36:1-37:1), and with Jacob (37:2-50:26). Going back to some of the earlier toledot, we notice that Gen. 5:1, 2 begins with the creation of man and ends with God's repentance about ever having made man (6:6-8). The third toledot begins with Noah (6:9), and ends with the curse upon Ham (9:29). The fourth one begins with the survivors of the flood (10:1) and ends with the building of the tower and the confusion of tongues. This line is then continued via Shem (11:10-26) to Terah.

Thus it becomes clear that the composition of Genesis consists of ten toledoth-sections, each appropriately introduced with the well-known formula: "these are the toledoth of...." Holwerda considers this to be a fundamental argument in criticism of the documentary hypothesis. In this he is followed by Kulling. The author of Genesis, in other words, has himself given us a clue as to the composition of his book, a composition which suggests a well thought-out plan. The toledot formulas have not been subsequently added to an already existing text, but are the very fabric around which the whole of Genesis has
been constructed. Even those materials in Genesis which do not belong to the alleged P document are an integral part of the original composition of the book. Kulling concludes that the toledoth have shown us that Genesis is "eine konstruierte Tendenzschrift" (p. 226). But--and this is the important thing--this construction is an original one, not a later addition; and it runs through the entire book of Genesis, not just the supposed P materials.

The present writer considers the approach of Holwerda-Kulling-Gispen to be a fruitful one. Many important benefits can be gathered from it, both for the question of the origin of the Pentateuch and for a correct understanding of the message of this part of Holy Scripture. For this reason this viewpoint is offered to the readers for consideration.

In conclusion, attention should be called to Professor Gispen's reaction to the views of Professor Wiseman reported above. Commenting on the view that the toledot must be regarded as colophons, written at the end of the section, not at the beginning, and designating the names of the persons who were in possession of the clay tablets used by Moses in the writing of his book, Gispen remarks: "This hypothesis is very improbable and does not suffice as an explanation of the toledot formulas" (Gispen, p. 111).

-M. H. WOUDSTRA

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Ancient Ecologies and the Biblical Perspective

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The word "ecology" was first coined in 1873\(^1\) but men in ancient times were at least partially aware of "the inter-relationships of living things to one another and their surrounding environment."\(^2\) Today we understand much more clearly the delicate balances involved in the relationships between nature and man's activities. But even now we do not always foresee all the results of constructing a project like the Aswan Dam in Egypt.\(^3\)

Although we may comprehend the causes and processes, we are still unable to do much more than the ancients to prevent such natural disasters as droughts and locust plagues. In recent years disastrous droughts caused by the failure of the summer monsoon rains affected twenty million people in the Sahel region of Africa.\(^4\)

Periods of drought kill the predators of locusts and grasshoppers, and also leave cracks in the ground which provide good nesting areas. If such periods are followed by moist seasons, conditions are ripe for the formation of plagues of such swarming insects. In the summer of 1978, 33 locust swarms were reported over Ethiopia and 17 over Somalia, some covering up to 40 square miles.\(^5\) At the same time huge infestations of grasshoppers have been reported attacking the fields in Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.\(^6\) Such swarms of hoppers, so thick that they obstructed the view of the sun, devastated Kansas in 1873 and in 1919.\(^7\)

In the following study I examine how the peoples of the ancient world viewed such calamities. I compare the view-
points of the pagans and those of Jews and Christians, noting both similarities and differences. Such a study raises questions which I consider in the conclusion.

**THE CLIMATE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN**

The lands of the Bible include for the Old Testament period Palestine, Phoenicia (Lebanon), Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia (Iraq); for the New Testament period we have in addition the lands to which the Gospel was carried: Anatolia (Turkey), Greece, and Italy. Almost all of these areas border the Mediterranean Sea and are affected by the climatic conditions associated with it with, of course, local variations. The chief features of the common "Mediterranean" climate are: (1) a prolonged summer drought, (2) heavy winter rains, and (3) a relatively small range of temperatures. Throughout the entire area, with few exceptions, rain water was precious and was conserved by cisterns.

**Mesopotamia**

The land "between the rivers," the Tigris and the Euphrates, was irrigated by two of the four streams associated with the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:14). At the northern edge of the Fertile Crescent sufficient rain fell on the "hilly flanks" of the Zagros Mountains, which divide the alluvial plains of Mesopotamia from the upland plateau of Iran, to make this area Robert J. Braidwood's candidate for the first area to develop the Neolithic "revolution" of agriculture. As for the central area of Mesopotamia itself, M. A. Beek observes:

> Because of the dryness of the climate the soil of Mesopotamia is hard and nearly impenetrable. Consequently, when the heavy rainfall in the northern areas coincides with the melting of the snow in the Taurus and Zagros Mountains, the rivers wreak destruction...11

The Mesopotamian floods are not only destructive but they are highly unpredictable. They come in the spring...
rather than in the summer when the water is most needed. Especially swift are the flood waters of the Tigris, whose Akkadian name *Idiglat* (cf. Hebrew *Hiddeqel*, Gen. 2:14) means "Arrow." The people of Mesopotamia, however, were able to use the waters of the rivers through canals for irrigation purposes, though this demanded the combined efforts of communities as constant attention was required to maintain the dikes and canals.\(^{12}\) In times of war, the canals would be neglected and the weeds would grow in them. In his lamentation over Ur, a poet cried out: "Your river which had been made fit for the *magur*-boats-in its midst the. . . -plant grows."\(^{13}\)

**Egypt**

In striking contrast to Mesopotamia is the felicitous situation of Egypt. The statement of Herodotus that Egypt was "the gift of the Nile" still holds true today. Fed by the tropical rains of central Africa, the White Nile and the Blue Nile from Ethiopia join together near Khartoum to flood with such regularity that the Egyptians were able to regulate their calendars by the annual floods.\(^{14}\) The flooding also came at the most propitious time for agriculture. The four months of inundation (June to September) were called *Akhet* "Flood," followed by *Perit* "Coming Forth" (October to January) and by *Shemou* "Deficiency" (February to May).\(^{15}\)

The Egyptians could tell how high the Nile would rise by a Nilometer which they had carved at the island of Elephantine near Aswan. A low Nile would mean that not enough fields would be irrigated and that famine would ensue. On the other hand, a Nile that was too high might mean the destruction of dikes. Ordinarily Egypt had a sufficient surplus to supply starving bedouins from Palestine such as the biblical patriarchs (cf. Gen. 12:10 ff., 26:1 ff., 43:1 ff.).\(^{16}\) Down through the period of the Roman Empire Egypt served as the most important "bread basket" of the Mediterranean.
By the 14th cent. B.C. the Egyptians had invented the *shaduf*, a weighted lever to lift the water. The *saqiya*, the animal-drawn water wheel, was introduced only in Persian or Ptolemaic times (5th to 3rd cent. B.C.). Archimedes (287-212 B.C.) is credited with the invention of the hydraulic screw.

Apart from the coastal region, rain rarely falls in Egypt. According to H. Kees:

At the present day Alexandria enjoys annually about 25 to 30 days of rain with a rainfall of about 8 inches, while Cairo and its environs has on the average, mostly in January ½ to 2 inches. In the upper Nile valley on the other hand for as far back as our knowledge reaches, rain has always been an exceptional phenomenon, the accompaniment of occasional storms and less a blessing than a catastrophe, associated in people's minds with the dangerous powers of the desert.

**Greece**

Greece enjoys a typically Mediterranean climate with a rainless summer from the middle of May to the middle of September. The stormy weather of winter generally brought sailing and fighting to a halt. As the prevailing, winds are from the west, three times as much rain falls in the west as falls in the east, for example, in Corcyra (Corfu) as compared to Athens.

In 1966 Rhys Carpenter offered a climatological explanation for the fall of the Mycenaean kingdoms c. 1200 B.C. in place of the traditional view of a Dorian invasion. His theory was criticized by E. Wright, who pointed out that pollen samples from northwestern Greece from this period indicated no drought. But climatologists have shown from records for 1955 that the climatic pattern which Carpenter posited, with an extensive drought for the Peloponnese but not for northwest Greece or for Athens, is quite possible. Whether or not such a drought caused the Mycenaean decline is still a moot point. It is more likely that a combination of factors, including drought and
famine followed by the dislocations of such groups as the Dorians and the Sea Peoples, caused the Mycenaean collapse and the beginning of the Greek Dark Age.\textsuperscript{24}
Meteorological Factors.
Several factors produce the characteristic weather of Palestine. The country lies between 33° 15' and 31° 15' N as far south as Beersheba, which is the same latitude as the southernmost section of California. It is therefore on the northern margin of the subtropical region. The presence of the Mediterranean to the west, and the deserts to the south and the east play a major role, as does the great variety of topographical features.

The following regional generalizations may be made: (1) temperature decreases with height and increases with depth below sea level. (2) The temperature ranges increase as one moves away from the moderating influence of the sea. (3) Rain tends to decrease from north to south. (4) Rain decreases from west to east. (5) Rain increases as heights are encountered. (6) As the prevailing moisture bearing winds are from the west, rain precipitates on the western slopes, leaving the eastern slopes in a "rain shadow."

Winds.
During the summer Palestine lies midway between a monsoon low over the Persian Gulf and a high pressure area in the Atlantic. It therefore enjoys steady NW Etesian winds and a sunny almost rainless summer, as there are no frontal storms of cold air clashing with warm air masses. In the winter, however, cold maritime air pushes south into the Mediterranean where it clashes with warm tropical air masses, creating wet and stormy weather (Job 37:9). In the winter season the moisture bearing winds from the W and SW precipitate rains as they encounter colder land and air masses (I Kgs. 18:44; Lk. 12:54). But during the summer the drier NW winds encounter only warm land and air masses and do not precipitate any rain. The winds do, however, mitigate the heat of the day. The westerly winds reach the Transjordanian plateau about 3 p.m. These regular winds are used for the winnowing of grain (Ps. 1:4)
even to this day.

North winds are relatively rare. There are two types. Chiefly in October a cold dry wind seeps over the mountain barriers from Central Asia (Sirach 43:20). In March a surge of polar air across the Balkans may produce heavy rains (Prov. 25:23).

The scorching desert wind (sirrocco, khamsin) from the E, SE, or S was and still is a dreaded phenomenon. It strikes for three to four days in the transitional seasons. A sirrocco will produce the hottest temperatures of the year, often 20 degrees above the average (Jer. 4:11). What makes matters worse is the fact that it is an exceedingly dry wind, dropping relative humidity by 30-40%, fraying tempers, and debilitating energies. The air is filled with a fine yellowish dust which veils the sun and reduces visibility. The sirroccos of the spring are particularly devastating, withering the winter vegetation in a few hours (Ps. 103:15-16; Isa. 40:6-8; Ezk. 17:10, 19:12; Hos. 13:15; Jon. 4:8). The fullest fury of the sirrocco is experienced in the Transjordan, the Negev, and the Rift Valley. In coastal regions the sirrocco winds may pour down the slopes at 60 miles per hour, shattering ships in the harbors (Ps. 48:7; Ezk. 27:26).

Precipitation.29

The Rainy Season. The exact commencement of the rainy season is not predictable but in general the rainy season runs from mid-October to mid-May.30 The rainy season includes, but is also more extensive than our winter months (cf. Song 2:11). In this season three to four days of heavy rain alternate with dry days during which cold desert winds blow from the east.31

The Early and the Latter Rains. The Bible refers repeatedly to the early (RSV "autumn") and the latter (RSV "spring") rains (Deut. 11:14; Jer. 5:24; Joel 2:23), giving the average reader the impression that rains fall only at the beginning and the end of the rainy season. As a matter of fact most of the heaviest rains fall in the middle of the season (Lev. 26:4; Ezra 10:9, 13). These initial and final
rains are stressed because they are crucial for agriculture. The early rains come in October before plowing and sowing. The latter rains fall in March and April and are needed to make the grain swell for a good harvest (Hos. 6:3; Zech. 10:1).

Drought and Unseasonable Rains. If the high pressure areas over Europe and Asia in the north link up with the high pressures over Africa and Arabia, this blocks cyclonic storms from arriving through the trough of low pressure in the Mediterranean. In this case rain is sometimes delayed until as late as December; in some years rain amounts to only 50 to 75% of the average. A catastrophic drought that lasted 3 1/2 years is recorded for Elijah's day (I Kgs. 17:1; Lk. 4:25; Jas. 5:17. Cf. Deut. 28:23-24; I Kgs. 8:35; Jer. 14:3-6).32

If the thermal difference between the warm and cold air masses is not great, rainless clouds float by (Prov. 25:14; Jude 12). On rare occasions a late surge of cold Atlantic air penetrates into the area of Palestine in the summer, bringing unseasonable rain (I Sam. 12:17; Prov. 26:1).

The Distribution of Precipitation. As Amos 4:7 indicates, there are considerable local differences in the distribution of rainfall in Palestine.33 Galilee receives the greatest amount of rain from 28" to 40". Haifa on the coast receives an average of 24", Tiberias 16-18", and Beth-shean in the Jordan Valley only 12". In Judea the foothills receive 16-22". Rainfall at Jerusalem generally fluctuates from 17" to 28", with an average of 25".34 Jericho receives an average of 4-6"; in the very wet winter of 1944 it recorded 13".35 The southern end of the Dead Sea receives only 2".

The steppe region around Beersheba receives between 12" to 16"; areas in the Negev to the south receive less than 8". In the Hellenistic and early Roman era, the Nabataean Arabs by a careful conservation of water by terraces were able to raise wheat, barley, legumes, grapes, figs and dates in the Negev.36 Modern Israeli researches have attempted to reduplicate their feats.37
Dew.\textsuperscript{38} The summer drought was not due to the lack of humidity, which is in fact twice as intense in the summer as in the rest of the year. The lack of rain storms is due to the absence of frontal clashes between warm and cold air masses. The summer humidity manifests itself in the dew that condenses as the ground cools during the night. At Gaza with its extremes of temperatures dew may form as many times as 250 nights per year. Gideon was able to collect a bowl full of water from the fleece which he had set out (Jud. 6:38).

Dew is vital for the growth of grapes during the summer (Zech. 8:12). It was indeed a calamitous drought when not even dew was available (II Sam. 1:21; I Kgs. 17:1; Hag. 1:10). Its value may be seen in the numerous comparisons of God's grace and goodness to the benefaction of dew (Gen. 27:28; Isa. 18:4; Hos. 14:5; Mic. 5:7; Sirach 43:22).

THE MYTHOLOGICAL VIEWS OF THE PAGANS

Mesopotamia

Among the early Sumerians (3rd millennium B.C.) the bringing of rain and subsequent flooding was attributed either to Enlil, the leading god of the pantheon, or to Enki, god of water and wisdom. Without Enlil "in heaven the rain-laden clouds would not open their mouths, the fields and meadows would not be filled with rich grain, in the steppe grass and herbs, its delight would not grow."\textsuperscript{39}

For the later Babylonians (2nd-1st millennium B.C.) the pre-eminent rain god was the Syrian god Adad (Hadad). In the \textit{Atrahasis Epic}, the full text of which was discovered only in 1965, we have the following developments preceding the catastrophic Flood. When Enlil is disturbed by the clamor of proliferating mankind, he orders:

\begin{quote}
Cut off supplies for the peoples,  
Let there be a scarcity of plant life to satisfy their hunger.  
Adad should withhold his rain,
\end{quote}
And below, the flood should not come up from the abyss.\(^{40}\)

Let the wind blow and parch the ground,
Let the clouds thicken but not release a downpour, (II.i.9-16)\(^{41}\)

People sought to placate Adad with gifts of loaves and offerings, so that "he may rain down in a mist in the morning, and may furtively rain down a dew in the night." (II.ii.16-17)\(^{42}\) But "Adad roared in the clouds," and sent not just rain but the Deluge.

From the *Gilgamesh Epic* we learn that when the Flood came,

(Even) the gods were terror-stricken at the deluge,
They fled and ascended to the heaven of Anu;
The gods cowered like dogs. . . . \(^{43}\)

Important mythological concepts regarding fertility centered on the Mesopotamian cult of Inanna (Ishtar) and her consort Dumuzi (Tammuz). In the text of the famous myth, "The Descent of Inanna (Ishtar)," the goddess descends into the Underworld and is slain by her sister. Upon her death procreation among animals and humans ceases only to be restored with her resurrection.\(^{44}\) The Mesopotamians practiced a *hieros gamos* or "sacred marriage" rite between the king representing Dumuzi/Tammuz and a sacred prostitute representing Inanna/Ishtar to ensure the fertility of the land by sympathetic magic.\(^{45}\)

**Egypt**

The Egyptians honored the Nile River as the god *Hapy*; whom they depicted as a well nourished man with pendulous breasts. Thousands of miniature figures of this god were made and offered to him in temples prior to the flooding of the river.\(^{46}\) The most important god of the Egyptians apart from the sun god was Osiris, the god of the underworld. As early as the Old Kingdom (3rd millennium B.C.) Osiris was identified with the life-giving waters. According to Breasted:
It was water as a source of fertility, water as a life-giving agency with which Osiris was identified. It is water which brings life to the soil, and when the inundation comes the Earth-god Geb says to Osiris: "The divine fluid that is in thee cries out, thy heart lives, thy divine limbs move, thy joints are loosed," in which we discern the water bringing life and causing the resurrection of Osiris, the soil.  

**Greece**

The seasonal cycle of fertility and drought is most vividly depicted by the Greek myth of Demeter and her daughter Persephone, who was abducted by Hades. While Demeter, the goddess of grain, mourned for her missing daughter, the entire land was afflicted with infertility. After she was discovered, Persephone still had to spend four months each year in the Underworld because she had eaten four pomegranate seeds there. The mysteries of Demeter and Persephone were celebrated at Eleusis, just west of Athens.  

Because of the regularity of the seasons in Greece, it was seldom necessary to pray for rain. According to Nilsson:

> On Mount Lykaion (in Arcadia) there was a well called Hagno. When there was need of rain the priest of Zeus went to this well, performed ceremonies and prayers, and dipped an oak twig into the water. Thereupon a haze arose from the well and condensed into clouds, and soon there was rain all over Arcadia.

**Syria and Palestine**

The climate of Syria and Palestine played an important role in the development of Canaanite religion. Baly and Tushingham describe the situation as follows:

> Precariousness, indeed, is everywhere the dread companion of rain-fed agriculture in the Middle East, and especially toward the south and inward from the seacoast. Over very large areas it is impossible to exaggerate the sense of desperate insecurity which accompanies the farmer upon his rounds. . . . Almost the whole of Canaanite religion was built around this desperate anxiety, this passionate longing for a fertile earth, . . .
Our understanding of the Canaanites has been greatly advanced by the discovery of Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit) on the coast of Syria, and the subsequent publication of Ugaritic texts. These reveal that the Canaanite Baal or "Lord" par excellence was Hadad, the god manifest in storms and rains.\textsuperscript{52} Millard comments:
Controlling the rains, mist, and dew, Hadad held the keys of good harvests, so the existence of a myth describing his battles with death, barrenness, and threatening flood waters among the texts of Ugarit is no surprise. 53

As in Mesopotamia the vitality of the king was linked magically with the fertility of the land. When the legendary "king Kret was sick, nature likewise languished. When prince Aqhat died, a great drought ensued:

Thereupon Danel the Rephaite prayed (that) the clouds in the heat of the season, (that) the clouds should rain early rain (and) give plentiful dew in summer for the fruits. Baal failed for seven years, the rider on the clouds for eight (years, leaving the land) without dew, without showers. (Aqhat I.i.38-44) 54

Many scholars have supposed, in analogy with Greek mythology, that Baal died annually and rose to life, symbolizing the rainless summer and the rainy winter. But the epic does not speak of an annual event but of a prolonged drought. As Gordon points out, the summer is normally dry and what was dreaded were dewless summers and rainless winters. 55

The priests of Baal, who were confronted by Elijah (I Kgs. 18), tried to arouse their god to produce rain not only by their prayers but also by magical rites such as leaping about the altar and shedding their blood—but in vain. 56 Patai has suggested that Elijah also used magical gestures. But it is quite clear that when Elijah had water poured on the offerings, he was not making a libation but was demonstrating the supernatural power of God by making the ignition more difficult. 57

THE OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

Though some have blamed the Judeo-Christian tradition of man's relation to nature as expressed in Gen. 1:28's command "to replenish the earth and subdue it" as the grounds
for our present ecological crisis,\textsuperscript{58} further reflection
demonstrates that this is not a sound conclusion. As John
Black notes, the Hebrews evolved "a concept of man's
responsibility to God for the management of the earth, a
concept which was duly carried over into Christianity,
becoming part of the western heritage."\textsuperscript{59} Commenting on
Judeo-Christian theology, Glacken observes:

Most striking for our themes, is the idea of the dominion of man as
expressed in Genesis, and repeatedly expressed in other writings,
notably Psalm 8. But one must not read these passages with modern
spectacles, which is easy to do in an age like ours when "man's con-
trol over nature" is a phrase that comes as easily as a morning
greeting. . . . Man's power as a vice-regent of God on earth is part of
the design of creation and there is in this fully elaborated conception
far less room for arrogance and pride than the bare reading of the
words would suggest.\textsuperscript{60}

It is man's sinful exploitation of the universe, his con-
temp for God's creation, which has led to our present
ecological crisis. As E. M. Blaiklock writes:

The ravaged world, the polluted atmosphere, the poisoned rivers,
dead lakes, encroaching desert, and all the irreversible damage to
man's fragile environment comes from treating the globe we live on
with contempt. Modern man is arrogant and domineering. Man was
put in a garden, says the old Hebrew account in Genesis "to tend
it."\textsuperscript{61}

If blame must be placed, we might well consider our
western heritage from the Romans. From his survey of the
ancient world and ecology, Hughes concludes:

Our Western attitudes can be traced most directly to the secular
businesslike Romans. Today the process of dominating the earth is
seen not as a religious crusade following a biblical commandment
but as a profitable venture seeking economic benefit. In this, we are
closer to the Romans than to any other ancient people, and in this we
demonstrate to a great extent our heritage from them.\textsuperscript{62}
The Blessings of Rain (Citations are from the RSV.)

According to Deut. 11:10-11, 13-14, the Lord said to the children of Israel:

For the land which you are entering to take possession of it is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered it with your feet, like a garden of vegetables; but the land which you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, . . . And if you will obey my commandments. . . (I) will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, that you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil.

Jeremiah proclaims that it is only the Lord rather than the pagan gods who sends rain (Jer. 14:22): "Are there any among the false gods of the nations that can bring rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Art thou not he, O Lord our God? We set our hope on thee, for thou doest all these things." But the wayward children of Israel fail to recognize this (Jer. 5:24): "They do not say in their hearts, 'Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.'"

Elihu, Job's friend, declares:

Behold, God is great, . . . .
For he draws up the water, he distils his mist in rain which the skies pour down and drop upon man abundantly. Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunderings of his pavilion? (Job 36:26-29)

Among the questions which the Lord Himself posed as He spoke out of the whirlwind to Job are the following:

Who has cleft a channel for the torrents of rain, and a way for the thunderbolt, to bring rain on a land where no man is, on the desert in which there is no man; to satisfy the waste and desolate land, and to make the ground put forth grass? Has the rain a father, or who
has begotten the drops of dew? (Job 38:25-28)

God has promised rain as a blessing for obedience: "If you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them, then I will give you your rains in their season,
and the land shall yield its increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit." (Lev. 26:3-4)

The Judgment of Drought

Conversely for disobedience the Lord has threatened drought:

Take heed lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, and the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and he shut up the heavens, so that there be no rain, and the land yield no fruit, and you perish quickly off the good land which the Lord gives you. (Deut. 11:16-17)

The most famous instance of drought as a judgment of God is the three and a half year drought called down by Elijah in the reign of Ahab in the 9th cent. B.C. (I Kgs. 17; Sirach 48:2-3; Luke 4:25; Jas. 5:17). In the early 6th cent. B.C. when Judah forsook the Lord, Jeremiah called upon the heavens to be appalled, literally "be exceedingly dried up" (Jer. 2:12). Cf. Jer. 14:1-6 for a vivid description of drought conditions.

Still later in the 6th cent. after the Exile, the Jews returned from Mesopotamia and were challenged to rebuild the temple. When they were less than dedicated to the task, the prophet Haggai rebuked them with a paronomasia or play on words. He proclaimed that because the Lord's house had remained in "ruins" (hareb, Hag. 1:4,9) the Lord would bring a "drought" (horeb, Hag. 1:11) upon the land.

On the other hand, as a sign of God's displeasure Samuel called down rain during the late wheat harvest (June), when rain was not expected:

"Is it not wheat harvest today? I will call upon the Lord, that he may send thunder and rain; and you shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking for yourselves a king." So Samuel called upon the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day. . . . (I Sam. 12:17-18)
Prayers for Rain

When a drought was prolonged, the remedy lay in repentance and in prayer as we see from Solomon's famous intercession (I Kgs. 8:35-36):

When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against thee, if they pray toward this place, and acknowledge thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them, then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, thy people Israel, . . . and grant rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people as an inheritance.

The most dramatic instance of the prayer of a godly man to end a drought was, of course, Elijah's intercession in his contest with the priests of Baal (I Kgs. 18; Jas. 5:17). Joel called for a fast along with repentance to end the double calamity of drought and locust swarms in his day (Joel 1:14-20). Zech: 10:1 encourages such prayer: "Ask rain from the Lord in the season of the spring rain, from the Lord who makes the storm clouds, who gives men showers of rain. . . ."

Problematic is the interpretation of M. Dahood that Psalm 4 is actually a prayer for rain. His interpretation is based on rendering the Hebrew word tob "good" in verse 7 as a word for rain by comparing Jer. 17:6, Deut. 28:12, etc where it is clear that "good" means "rain."

THE NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus commended the benevolence of God in that He "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mat. 5:45). He further cited the heavenly Father's care over the birds of the air (Mat. 6:26), the lilies of the field (Mat. 6:28), and the grass of the field (Mat. 6:30) as ample reasons trusting in God's provisions and for eschewing anxiety.

In his sermon to the pagan Lycaonians of Lystra, Paul
adduces God's provision in nature as evidence that He had not left the pagan nations without a witness (Acts 14:17): "yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." Cf. Rom. 1:19, 20.  

As an example of the effective prayer of a righteous man James cites the example of Elijah who first prayed for a drought and then ended it (Jas. 5:17-18): "Elijah was a man of like nature with ourselves and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit." In the Apocalypse the two witnesses of Rev. 11 "have power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying" (Rev. 11:6).

A number of droughts and famines are recorded by Roman historians for the New Testament era. In 22 B.C. a mob shut up the Roman Senate in the Curia building and forced them to vote Augustus the dictatorship so that he could deal with the food situation. In his autobiographical Res Gestae (5.2) Augustus boasted: "I did not decline in the great dearth of grain to undertake the charge of the grain supply, which I so administered that within a few days I delivered the whole city from apprehension and immediate danger at my own cost and by my own efforts." There was a later famine in his reign in A.D. 6.

During the reign of Claudius a noteworthy series of droughts and poor harvests culminated in a widespread famine during the procuratorial administration of Tiberius Julius Alexander over Judea (A.D. 46-48). Josephus reports (Antiq. III.320 ff.; XX.51-53, 101) that Queen Helena of Adiabene, a recent convert to Judaism with her son Izates, sent aid to the Jews in the form of monetary gifts, grain from Egypt, and figs from Cyprus. This is the same drought which was predicted by Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem, to the church at Antioch (Acts 11:27-30):
Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius. And the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brethren who lived in Judea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.
Kenneth S. Gapp correlates the famine under Claudius with an unusually high Nile in the year A.D. 45 when grain prices doubled.\textsuperscript{66} He concludes that "the evidence of official documents among the papyri from Egypt and of independent sources. Pliny and Josephus, so supports Luke's account of the universal famine that the accuracy of the statement can no longer be challenged."\textsuperscript{67} Gapp makes the acute observation that in the ancient world famine was essentially a class famine:

Since the poor and the improvident never had large reserves either of money or of food, they suffered immediately upon any considerable rise in the cost of living. The rich, on the other hand, had large reserves both of money and of hoarded grain, and rarely, if ever, experienced hunger during famine. Thus, while all classes of society suffered serious economic discomfort during a shortage of grain, the actual hunger and starvation were restricted to the lower classes.\textsuperscript{68}

Christ taught that one should be satisfied with one's "daily bread."\textsuperscript{69} In view of the disparity of wealth, the "Christian ethic inspired sharing with those in need" (Acts 4:34, 6:1; II Cor. 8:8-15; Jas. 2:14-16; I John 3:17.)\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{POST-BIBLICAL JEWISH DEVELOPMENTS}

The Jewish rabbis of the first three centuries of the common Era (1st-3rd cent, A.D.) elaborated upon biblical precepts, sometimes by fanciful exegesis.

Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai said: Three things are equal in their value: Earth, Man and Rain, R. Levi bar Hiyya said: And all the three are of three letters. . . . , to teach you, that if there is no earth, there is no rain, if there is no rain, there is no earth, and without both of them no man can exist.\textsuperscript{71}

In the early 2nd cent, A.D. the rabbis attributed a gradual diminution in rain to the sins of the people. Rabbi Eleazar b. Perata (fl. A.D. 110-35) said: "From the day the
Temple was destroyed the rains have become irregular in the world. There is a year which has abundant rains and there is a year with but little rain.\textsuperscript{72}

To assure the coming of rain the rabbis laid stress on the feast of Sukkoth (Tabernacles) on the basis of Zech. 14:16-17. They also laid down elaborate regulations for the observation of fasts in times of drought in the Mishnah (Ta'anith 1.2-7). If by the seventh of Marheshvan (around November) there has been no rain, one begins praying for rain. If none has fallen by the 17th, public fasts are ordered on Mondays and Thursdays all through the winter season.\textsuperscript{73}

Commenting on Eccl. 10:11, "If the serpent bite before it is charmed, then the charmer (lit. whisperer) hath no advantage," Rabbi Ami said: "If you see a generation over whom the heavens are rust-colored like copper and do not let down dew or rain, it is because there are no 'whisperers' (i.e. people who pray silently) in that generation."\textsuperscript{74}

One sage, Honi the Rainmaker, had a legendary gift for calling down rain. It is said that he drew a circle, and standing in the middle of it said:

"Lord of the world! . . . I swear by your great name that I shall not move from here until you will turn merciful unto your children."

When the rain began dripping he said: "Not thus did I ask but a rain for cisterns, pits and caves." Then the rain began to fall violently and Honi said: "Not thus did I ask but a rain of mercy, blessing and generosity." Then the rain fell as it should fall.\textsuperscript{75}

Even in such calamitous times as droughts there were always the unscrupulous few who tried to exploit the situation for their own advantage. The rabbis denounced the wealthy who hoarded up large stocks of grain, wine and oil to sell them at inflated prices by quoting Amos 8:4-7. In the days of Rabbi Tanhuma, the people came to him and asked him to order a fast for rain. "He ordered a fast, one day, a second day, a third day, and no rain came. Then he went to them and preached: 'My sons, have compassion on each
other and the Holy One blessed be He will also have com-
passion on you."*\(^76\)

**POST-BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENTS**

During the early Roman Empire the pagans sought to blame the Christians for any unnatural disaster. As Tertullian so pungently expressed it: "If the Tiber reaches the walls, if the Nile does not rise to the fields, if the sky doesn't move or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, the cry is at once: 'The Christians to the lion.'"*\(^77\)
The pagan Symmachus blamed the famines of A.D. 384 upon the Christians.

Arnobius, a Christian apologist (fl. A.D. 300), in his work, *Against the Heathen*, asks:

What is the ground of the allegation, that a plague was brought upon the earth after the Christian religion came into the world, and after it revealed the mysteries of hidden truth? But pestilences, say my opponents, and droughts, wars, famines, locusts, mice, and hailstones, and other hurtful things, by which the property of men is assailed, the gods bring upon us, incensed as they are by your wrong-doings and by your transgressions. . . . For if we are to blame, and if these plagues have been devised against our sin, whence did antiquity know these names for misfortunes?*\(^78\)

Augustine likewise responded by pointing out that such calamities had occurred long before the conversion of Constantine and the Christianization of the Empire: "Let those who have no gratitude to Christ for His great benefits, blame their own gods for these heavy disasters."*\(^79\)

Finally, Christians turned the accusation against pagans, Jew, Samaritans, and heretics, blaming them for unseasonable calamities. In the Novellae Theodosiani 3.1.8 (4th cent. A.D.) we read the following denunciation:

Shall we endure longer that the succession of the seasons be changed, and the temper of the heavens be stirred to anger, since the embittered perfidy of the pagans does not know how to preserve
these balances of nature? For why has the spring renounced its accustomed charm? Why has the summer, barren of its harvest, deprived the laboring farmer of his hope of a grain harvest? Why has the intemperate ferocity and the winter with its piercing cold doomed the fertility of the lands with the disaster of sterility? Why all these things, unless nature has transgressed the decree of its own law to avenge such impiety?\textsuperscript{80}

**LOCUSTS**

As noted in the introduction, periods of unseasonable heat and drought are sometimes accompanied by plagues of locusts. The Canaanite texts speak of the dreaded succession
of dry or locust years. Their frightening numbers made them an image of frequent appearance in the ancient texts. In the Sumerian lamentation the possessions of Ur are devoured as by a "heavy swarm of locusts." In the Ugaritic Keret Epic (I.iv.29-31) the soldiers of an army are said to have "settled like locusts on the field(s), like hoppers on the fringe of the wilderness."

At the end of treaties a frequent curse which was invoked upon those who might be tempted to break the agreement was the locust plague. In the Aramaic Sefīre treaty of north Syria (8th cent. B.C.), we read: "For seven years may the locust devour (Arpad), and for seven years may the worm eat. . . ." A similar curse is found in the treaty between the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (7th cent. B.C.) and his Median vassals: "Like locusts devour. . . may they cause your towns, your land (and) your district to be devoured."

There are nine Hebrew words which designate locusts in the Old Testament. Akkadian recognizes 18 names and the Talmud 20 names for locusts. Of the many Hebrew words arbeh is used most frequently, 24 times. The word is probably derived from the root raba "to become numerous." It occurs in Akkadian as erebu, arbu, and in Ugaritic as irby.

The arbeh plague (Deut. 28:38) is listed as one of the divine curses which would befall the Israelites if they disobeyed God's commands. The arbeh is one of the plagues which Moses called down upon Egypt (Ex. 10:4 ff.; Ps. 78:46, 105:34).

Locusts are used in similes of vast numbers in Jud. 6:5, 7:12; Jer. 46:23; Nah. 3:15. Though they had no leader yet their mass movements are coordinated (Prov. 30:27). Resting at night, they stir with the heat and disappear (Nah. 3:17). Job is asked whether he can make the horse "leap like a locust" (Job 39:20).

Locusts belong to the order of the Orthoptera "straight-winged" insects. With the grasshoppers they belong to the sub-family, Saltatoria, "leapers," which were considered edible (Lev. 11:21-22). Locusts belong to the Acridiidae
family of "short-horned grasshoppers." Of the 91 species found in Palestine only the desert locust (*Schistocerca gregoria* or *Acridium peregrinum*) has served to plague the Near East from time immemorial. It was only in 1929 that the phase change from solitary green grasshoppers to the larger, yellow gregarious phase was first observed. According to Baron:

Basically, the Desert Locust is a winged big brother of its fellow-acridid, the familiar grasshopper of English meadows, and quite often leads much the same sort of life. Like other species of locusts, however, it has the peculiarity of being able to change its habits--to live two lives, as it were--and it is this characteristic that makes it so great a potential menace.  

At maturity the desert locusts are two and a half inches long. They have two sets of wings and an enlarged pair of legs for jumping. Their appearance has been compared to horses (Joel 2:4; Job 39:20; Rev. 9:7; cf. German *Heupferd*, Italian *cavallette*.)

Desert locusts are phenomenal travelers. They are able to fly for 17 hours at a time and have been known to travel 1500 miles. The sound of their wings can be compared to the sound of chariots (Joel 2:5; Rev. 9:9). Their route of travel is determined by the prevailing winds (Ex. 10:13, 19). In the 1915 plague the locusts came to Jerusalem from the northeast (cf, Joel 2:20).  

The Bible does not exaggerate when it speaks of swarms of locusts covering the ground (Ex. 10:5). According to Baron:

We know from modern measurements of swarm areas and volumes that the descriptions repeatedly given in the Bible and elsewhere, of the sky being darkened and the sun eclipsed, are literally correct. For instance, during the plague that continued from 1948 to 1963, several swarms were recorded as exceeding a hundred square miles; and one is said to have been the size of London.
A truly large swarm may contain ten billion locusts! What is devastating is that each insect eats its own weight every day; a large swarm may weigh up to 80,000 tons.\(^92\)

The four words used by Joel (1:4, 2:25) in his vivid description of the locust plague evidently represent stages of the locusts' development (RSV) rather than separate species of insects (KJV).\(^93\) In Joel 2:25 we have first the *arbeh*, the mature locust which deposits the eggs.\(^94\) The *yeleq* may be the larva as it emerges from the egg.\(^95\) The *hasil* may be the intermediate instar (stage between moults): The *gazam* may be the ravenous nymph who strips the bark from trees.

To remove such insect plagues pagans resorted to prayer and to magical spells. From Sultantepe in northwest Mesopotamia we have "an incantation to remove caterpillar, devourer... cricket, red bug, vermin of the field from the field."\(^96\) The Greeks prayed to Apollo Parnopios (Locust) to obtain aid against locusts, just as they prayed to Apollo Smintheus (Field Mouse) against the plague. To get rid of caterpillars the Roman writer Columella "directs that a young menstruous girl should walk three times round the garden with bare feet and loosened hair and garments."\(^97\)

In contrast to the pagans, the Israelites resorted to fasting, repentance, and prayer in cases of locust plagues and other kinds of pestilences (I Kgs. 8:36-37; II Chr. 6:28). In the midst of a devastating locust plague the prophet Joel called the people to fasting and prayer (Joel 1:14, 2:15-17), and promised that the Lord would see their repentance and bless them (Joel 2: 18-32). The later Jewish rabbis also prescribed the blowing of the ram's horn to announce a fast: "For these things they sound the shofar in every place: blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar, wild beasts or the sword. They sound the shofar in that they are an overrunning affliction." (Ta'anith 3.5)\(^98\)
CONCLUSIONS

1. How is the biblical revelation different from pagan mythologies?
   Unlike materialistic naturalism the biblical perspective shares with the ancients a belief in the supernatural. But it differs radically from contemporary mythologies in
upholding a single, omnipotent God, who though He may be depicted in human similes, wholly transcends man and nature—in contrast to the pagan gods who were crudely anthropomorphic and who were intrinsically a part of the natural order. The Babylonian gods, for example, sent the Flood in capricious annoyance at man's rambunctious noisiness. Jehovah sent the Flood as a judgment against man's wickedness.

2. Why was God's revelation given where it was?
Certainly the local geographic and climate conditions of the Holy Land have qualified the human reception of the Lord's revelation. The sovereign God chose Palestine as the location for His revelation, a land whose climate made the Hebrews very conscious of their reliance upon God for rain and food.

3. Now that we know the causes of droughts and the progression of locust plagues are they any less the works of God?
Such a conclusion may be reached by unbelievers, but believers can only stand in greater awe as they learn more of the marvels and intricacies of God's creation. He is the God who uses the hurricane but also the lowly worm (Jonah 4:6) to reveal His power and purpose. As C. S. Lewis has remarked, "Each miracle writes for us in small letters something that God has already written, or will write, in letters almost too large to be noticed, across the whole canvas of Nature."

Natural disasters remind us that we do not live in a Paradise, and that the Creation itself groans for its redemption (Rom. 8:19-22). We cannot comprehend the reason for each tragedy but can realize that we live in a flawed universe. Though any given calamity may not be a specific judgment for sin (cf. John 9:1-3), each reminds us of our
creaturely weakness and the fragility of our life. From the
divine perspective death is not the ultimate tragedy but
rather a life lived without recognizing the Creator (Rom.
1:19-21. If we are not thankful for His daily provision
Jas. 1:17; I Tim. 4:3), He may get our attention by more
drastic events.

5. If God works through Nature, ought we do anything
to interfere with it?

Some extreme Calvinists opposed the introduction of
anaesthesia in the light of Gen. 3:16. Within the past year
members of a Dutch Reformed group have refused inocula-
tions as an interference with God's natural order. But God
does not call us to the passive fatalism of some Muslims
who say to everything, In sha'Allah "If Allah wills," and
then do nothing. Rather He has called us into partnership
with Him as stewards of His grace and creation. Times of
disaster provide us with opportunities for sharing and even
witness as organizations like World Vision have
demonstrated in our day.

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twelve times below the critical 20 inches (500 mm.) " Orni and
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60 Glacken (reference 2), p. 166.

Hughes (note 2), p. 149.


The writer of Hebrews (6:7) uses as an illustration of those who respond or do not respond to God's grace the following: "For land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God."


Ibid., p. 265.

Ibid., p. 261. George E. Mendenhall, "The Ancient in the Modern," in *Michigan Oriental Studies in Honor of George C. Cameron* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1976), p. 234, likewise observes that famines often involve social as well as natural factors: "The many references to famine that almost always accompany warfare and disintegration cannot therefore be explained as archaeologists always tend to do-by appealing to natural phenomena such as drought. The repeated references in available sources to emergency shipment of grain
proves beyond question that regions quite near the center of famine have an available surplus. The famine is therefore the result of complex socio-economic processes."


73 The Mishnah, tr. H. Danby (London: Oxford University, 1933), pp. 194-95.

74 Sperber, p. 285.


76 Patai, p. 285.


80 Cited in Sperber, p. 297.

81 Cf. Gordon in Kramer (note 55), p. 184. Cf. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Times of Feast, Times of Famine (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1971), p. 256: "At all events, the little optimum of the Middle Ages caused Europe to experience various gusts of warmth, and even sometimes great heat. These were responsible for the plagues of locusts which in the ninth-twelfth centuries sometimes spread over vast areas, sometimes far to the north. In A.D. 873, a time of great famine, they were found from Germany to Spain; during the autumn of 1195, they reached as far as Hungary and Austria."


83 Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends (reference 54), p. 33.

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In Lev. 11:22 the *arbeh* and three other types of locusts are listed as edible insects. Bas reliefs from Nineveh show servants bringing skewered locusts for Sennacherib's table.


The Damascus Document of the Dead Sea Scrolls stipulates: "As for the various kinds of locust, these are to be put in fire or water while they are still alive; for that is what their nature demands." *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, tr. T. H. Gaster (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 3rd ed., 1976), p. 85.

Many Africans and Arabs after removing the wings, legs, and heads eat locusts either cooked or ground up as flour.


91 Baron, p. ix.

92 *Ibid.*, p. 123. Augustine (note 79), p. 108, reports with some exaggeration a locust plague of 204 B.C. as follows: "One may also read that
Africa, which had by that time become a province of Rome, was visited by a prodigious multitude of locusts, which, after consuming the fruit and foliage of the trees, were driven into the sea in one vast and measureless cloud; so that when they were drowned and cast upon the shore the air was polluted, and so serious a pestilence produced that in the kingdom of Masinissa alone they say there perished 800,000 persons, besides a much greater number in the neighboring districts. At Utica they assure as that, of 30,000 soldiers then garrisoning it, there survived only ten."


94 Whiting, p. 516: "Each female, now loaded with eggs, seeks a place suitable to deposit them, and with her ovipositors is able to sink a hole as much as 4 inches deep through hard compact soil, such as would try the strength of human muscles even with iron tools."

95 In Joel 1:4 and 2:25 the yeleq may represent the young larval stage of the locust. The New English Bible and Jerusalem Bible suggest "hopper." But in Jer. 51:27 the yeleq is described as "rough," alluding to the horn-like sheath which covers the rudimentary wings of the nymph stage. In Nah. 3:16 the latest nymph stage is indicated as the locust moults and then unfurls its wings.


97 W. R. Halliday, Greek and Roman Folklore (New York: Cooper Square, 1963), p. 60.

98 Danby (reference 73), p. 198.


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SCRIPTURE IN THE HANDS OF GEOLOGISTS
(PART TWO)*

DAVIS A. YOUNG

III. Concordism

1. Neptunism

WE next trace the history of the concordist tradition. In general, concordists were more empirically minded than literalists and were willing to adopt more flexible interpretations of Scripture in order to harmonize with a developing scientific picture of terrestrial history. The concordist tradition began with neptunism and came into full flower in the nineteenth century.

Although diluvialism diminished by the end of the eighteenth century, other geological theories existed that could also be harmonized with Scripture. During the eighteenth and earliest nineteenth centuries one widely held theory, developed primarily in France and Germany and later transported to the British Isles,91 was neptunism. For many continental naturalists the neptunist approach was the best way to explain the features in rocks. Where efforts were made to correlate neptunism with biblical data, the writers often showed little conviction regarding the truth of Scripture. Interpretations of biblical texts were generally far less literalistic than those of British diluvialists and were put forward in order to maintain peace with the theologians. When transported into Great Britain, however, neptunism was defended on biblical grounds

* [Part One, which appeared in WTJ 49 (1987) 1-34, surveyed the history of literalism in the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis by Christian geologists. Part Two, focusing on the concordist tradition, concludes Dr. Young's essay.-Ed. ]

91 Some British neptunists, for example, Robert Jameson, learned their neptunism at the feet of the German scholar, Abraham Werner.
with the same zeal evident among earlier diluvialists. For British neptunists, neptunism was obviously what the Bible taught.

The major tenet of neptunism was that the original earth had been completely covered by the sea. As time elapsed, the sea diminished and landmasses emerged. Life gained a foothold on the landmasses and in shallow marine areas. The emerged landmasses were eroded, and the erosion products, including the remains of organisms, accumulated as fossiliferous sediment layers on the seafloor and on the flanks on the landmasses. To neptunists the observation that clearly marine stratified rocks rested on older primitive mountains was striking evidence that the world had emerged from a universal ocean. In a refined, late eighteenth to early nineteenth century version of neptunism developed by the great German geologist, Abraham G. Werner, the universal ocean was an aqueous solvent saturated with dissolved chemicals. As the ocean diminished the chemicals precipitated. Thus many layered and crystalline rocks were interpreted as chemical precipitates from the primeval ocean.

We examine here the harmonizations of two neptunists, Benoît de Maillet and Richard Kirwan. Benoît de Maillet was the French ambassador to Egypt, well acquainted with Arab culture. During his wide travels he observed European geology and concluded that rock strata had formed during gradual diminution of the ocean. He also concluded that the diminution had continued for an incredibly long time, perhaps as much as two billion years. He believed that the human race had existed for at least 500,000 years, that men had originated in the sea, and that mermaids were creatures that hadn't quite made the transition to human status. These views were couched within a Cartesian cosmology that favored the eternity of matter. Recognizing that such views would not

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92 Werner was a brilliant teacher and approached geology in a very systematic fashion so that he provided what appeared to be a logical way of ordering the disparate facts then known to geology. Through the brilliance of his teaching, Werner attracted able students to the mining academy of Freiberg who then spread Wernerian neptunism across Europe.

93 Benoît de Maillet, *Telliamed* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1968). This edition is an English translation with notes by A. V. Carozzi.

94 Ibid., 181.

95 Ibid., 158, 192-200.
be popular with the Roman Catholic Church in France, de Maillet presented his views as conversations between a French missionary and an Indian philosopher, Telliamed (de Maillet spelled backwards), who espoused the diminution of the sea. The work was published anonymously as *Telliamed* in the early eighteenth century.  

To gain acceptability, de Maillet, through the mouth of Telliamed, claimed that long-continued diminution of the ocean was compatible with Scripture. Because of his commitment to an extremely old earth and the possibility of the eternity of matter, de Maillet argued that the sentence, ‘In the beginning God created the Heavens and Earth,’ is a very improper translation of the Hebrew, that the words used in that language signify only ‘formed the Heavens and the Earth.’ Furthermore, the word ‘create’ is a new term, invented only a few centuries ago to express a new idea; therefore your Bible assumed the preexistence of matter when God formed the heavens and the earth.

Even the diminution of the ocean accorded with the creation account. Said de Maillet, speaking through the French missionary pondering Telliamed's ideas:

> God could indeed have used such means for the creation of the earth and the formation of the mountains through the action of the waters of the sea. The separation of the waters from the earth, as mentioned in Genesis, is even in favor of such an opinion. The void which first occurred on the earth and the uselessness of the latter at the beginning correspond to the same conditions postulated by our author for the initial stage of the globe. It is obvious, if not unquestionable, that the waters of the sea have built the mountains and uncovered through their diminution what they had formed during the first chaos of matter. This emergence led to the growth of grass and plants on the rocks; the vegetation in turn led to the creation of animals for which they represent the food supply; and finally the animals led to the creation of man who depends on them, as the last work of the hands of God.

The sequence of earth history seemed compatible with Scripture, but what of the problem of days if one were to postulate that the earth was approximately two billion years old? Telliamed was ready for this difficulty:

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96 See the editor's introduction (ibid., 1-53) for a discussion of early manuscripts of *Telliamed*.
97 Ibid., 161.
98 Ibid., 234.
The expression ‘six days’ mentioned in your sacred books for the completion of all these works is metaphorical, as you may easily imagine. It cannot even represent the time mentioned by Moses during which the earth rotates on itself six times in its annual orbit around the sun, since according to these same books, the sun was not created until the fourth day. Besides, do they not state that a thousand of your years represent no more than one day for God? Therefore, we must conclude that the six days employed by the Divinity to complete creation indicate a length of time much longer than the measure corresponding to our ordinary days.99

Unlike de Maillet, Richard Kirwan, an Irish chemist and mineralogist, was a devout, orthodox Christian. For Kirwan, geology was the handmaiden of true religion, and he repeatedly expressed alarm at systems of geology that struck him as favorable to atheism. In 1797, Kirwan set forth his conception of biblical geology.100 In typical Wernerian fashion, Kirwan believed that the earth at creation was covered by an "immense quantity" of aqueous fluid heated enough to dissolve enormous quantities of chemicals. As the ocean retreated from earth's surface, crystallization of minerals took place, and a tremendous amount of heat was released, triggering "an enormous and universal evaporation."101 The intensity of the heat increased until much of the primordial chemical precipitate burst into flames. Volcanic eruptions occurred on the "bosom of the deep."

The teaching of Gen 1:2 that the original earth was without form and void meant "that the earth was partly in a chaotic state, and partly full of empty cavities, which is exactly the state ... I have shewn to have been necessarily its primordial state."102 The deep or abyss "properly denotes an immense depth of water, but here it signifies ... the mixed or chaotic mass of earth and water."103 The spirit of God moving on the face of the waters referred to "an invisible elastic fluid, viz. the great evaporation that took place soon after the creation, as soon as the solids began to crystallize."104 Kirwan appealed

99 Ibid., 231.
101 Ibid., 245.
102 Ibid., 265.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., 266.
to Psalm 104 where the standing of the mountains above the waters alluded to the emergence of the primitive mountains above the receding neptunist ocean. The reference in Ps 104:5 to God's "fixing the earth on its basis, from which it shall not be removed for ever" denoted "the deposition of the solids contained in the chaotic waters, on the solid kernel of the globe, from whence they should never be removed nor indeed have they ever since."\(^{105}\)

After this episode, light was created, and the "production of light ... probably denotes the flames of volcanic eruptions."\(^{106}\) The firmament of the second day of creation was the atmosphere, formed by the evaporation of the waters of the deep. Lastly, the creation of fish and other organisms occurred only after the great deep had receded, precipitated its chemicals, and cooled. Neptunists maintained that fossil remains occurred almost exclusively in mechanically deposited rocks that were clearly superimposed on top of chemically precipitated rocks.

Kirwan believed that surficial gravels, erratic boulders, and many cave deposits were the result of the flood. The major source of floodwater was from caverns in the earth that had gradually filled during retreat of the primeval ocean. During the flood the waters "were miraculously educed out of those caverns."\(^{107}\) Since the universal ocean had once covered all the mountains of the earth, there would be sufficient water in the caverns to cover the mountains once more. Kirwan specified that the floodwaters surged out of the south and overflowed the northern continents, for it was on the northern continents that the vast deposits of surficial gravels, erratic boulders, and bone-filled cave deposits were recognized.\(^{108}\)

2. Nineteenth Century Concordism- Genesis 1

By about 1830, both diluvialism and neptunism had been rejected by the practicing geological community. Numerous discoveries pointed toward a long, complex, dynamic earth

\(^{105}\) Ibid.
\(^{106}\) Ibid., 267.
\(^{107}\) Ibid., 279.
\(^{108}\) Ibid., 280.
history that was totally incompatible with a global flood, and newer studies in the early nineteenth century indicated that rocks formerly interpreted as chemical precipitates from a universal ocean had cooled from intensely hot liquids injected into the overlying fossil-bearing strata.\textsuperscript{109} Stratigraphic evidence also made it clear that the ocean had repeatedly advanced on and retreated from the landmasses: it had not simply retreated uniformly. Moreover, successive advances and retreats had been accompanied by significant extinctions of large quadrupeds. Neptunism, like diluvialism, rightly fell by the wayside. Although both diluvialism and neptunism had temporarily provided useful frameworks for integrating theories of earth history with the meager data available at the time and had served as stimuli to further geological research, the time had come for them to be discarded. Diluvialism and neptunism could no longer adequately account for the wealth of geological data that were known by the early nineteenth century.

The recognition of the earth's vast antiquity caused little alarm among leading British and American Christian geologists of the early nineteenth century. Many of the great geologists of that era were devout and enthusiastic Christian believers who were fully committed to the infallibility of Scripture. Thus, even though Scripture played a diminishing role in professional technical geology, many geologists developed popular treatments of ways in which the results of geology could be related to biblical teaching. Many of these geologists sought to demonstrate how Scripture was fully compatible with the latest discoveries of geology. The golden age of concordism had arrived.

Two major schemes of harmonization were developed and refined during the nineteenth century: these were the gap and day-age interpretation of Genesis 1. The modern version of the gap theory was probably first advocated by the great Scottish minister and amateur devotee of science, Thomas Chal-
mers.\textsuperscript{110} Following his lead, several prominent Christian geologists, including Englishmen William Buckland and Adam Sedgwick and American Edward Hitchcock, espoused the gap theory as the preferred method for correlating Genesis and geology. There was relatively little difference among these geologists in their use of that theory. The major point in common was the interpretation of Gen 1:2. For the first time the "chaos" of that verse was not regarded as a primordial chaos of any kind but as a chaos that developed long after the initial creation of the planet.

William Buckland attempted a synthesis between geology and Genesis in his inaugural lecture at Oxford.\textsuperscript{111} He expressed the opinion that "the word 'beginning,' as applied to Moses in the first verse of the book of Genesis.... [ expresses ] an undefined period of time, which was antecedent to the last great change that affected the surface of the earth, and to the creation of its present animal and vegetable inhabitants; during which period a long series of operations and revolutions may have been going on."\textsuperscript{112} Later in his career, Buckland stated that "it is nowhere affirmed that God created the heaven and the earth in the first day, but in the beginning; this beginning may have been an epoch at an unmeasured distance, followed by periods of undefined duration, during which all the physical operations disclosed by Geology were going on."\textsuperscript{113} In support of this notion Buckland appealed to several church fathers who maintained that the work of the six days of creation did not begin until Gen 1:3. He further suggested that "millions of millions of years may have occupied the indefinite interval, between the beginning in which God created the heaven and the earth, and the evening or commencement of the first day of the Mosaic narrative."\textsuperscript{114} This long period of time between verses one and two was the supposed gap of

\textsuperscript{110} For the original quotation from Thomas Chalmers, see Hugh Miller, \textit{The Testimony of the Rocks} (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1857) 141.


\textsuperscript{112} William Buckland, \textit{Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology} (London: Wm. Pickering, 1837). Buckland's work is the sixth of the Bridgewater Treatises.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 21-22.
the gap theory. Of the second verse of Genesis 1 Buckland commented:

we have in this second verse, a distinct mention of earth and waters, as already existing, and involved in darkness; their condition also is described as a state of confusion and emptiness, (tohu bohu), words which are usually interpreted by the vague and indefinite Greek term, "chaos," and which may be geologically considered as designating the wreck and ruins of a former world. At this intermediate point of time, the preceding undefined geological periods had terminated, a new series of events commenced, and the work of the first morning of this new creation was the calling forth of light from a temporary darkness, which had overspread the ruins of the ancient earth.¹¹⁵

This new creation, following upon the great catastrophe, was described in the work of the six days. The new creation brought the earth into its present condition and could therefore properly be described as a re-creation or reconstruction of the earth. Thus the gap theory also became known as the ruin-reconstruction theory. The days of Genesis 1 were assumed to be ordinary 24-hour days, although Buckland was not opposed to thinking of them as longer stretches of time. To avoid having the entire world immersed in total darkness, devoid of vegetation, and devoid of animals at the conclusion of the catastrophe, some proponents of the theory, notably John Pye Smith,¹¹⁶ suggested that the ruin and reconstruction were localized in the middle eastern area that was the birthplace of modern humanity.

As geology developed during the nineteenth century, Christian geologists became less enthusiastic about the ability of the gap theory to achieve a satisfactory harmony with Scripture. Increasingly they turned to the day-age theory. The idea that the days of creation could be interpreted as periods of time was not new. De Maillet had long since suggested that the days were metaphorical. His suggestion had been adopted by the great French naturalist Buffon and by many early nineteenth century geologists such as James Parkinson, Robert Jameson, and Benjamin Silliman. It was not until mid-nine-

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 24-26.
teenth century, however, that day-age concordism became a fine art and achieved a high degree of refinement and subtlety.

The most eloquent of the great day-age concordists was the Scottish ecclesiastical journalist, onetime stonemason, and amateur paleontologist-geologist, Hugh Miller. Miller's mature thought on the relationship of geology to the Bible is spelled out in his great work *The Testimony of the Rocks*. Miller completely rejected the gap theory on the basis of its total incompatibility with geology. Geology had made it plain that there was no "age of general chaos, darkness, and death" separating the modern era from past geological ages. Indeed, "all the evidence runs counter to the supposition that immediately before the appearance of man upon earth, there existed a chaotic period which separated the previous from the present creation." Miller contended that the drama of creation had probably been revealed to Moses in a series of visions in much the same way that God had revealed the pattern of the tabernacle on the mount. Moses saw "by vision the pattern of those successive pre-Adamic creations, animal and vegetable, through which our world was fitted up as a place of human habitation." This series of visions revealed "successive scenes of a great air-drawn panorama." These visions were then described by Moses optically. In other words, "the inspired writer seized on but those salient points that, like the two great lights during these periods, a human eye." The visions were described and presented in the format of the six days. Unlike others who also held to the vision hypothesis, Miller did not remove the days from the province of chronology by restricting them to the province of prophetic vision. Instead, he maintained,

we must also hold, however, that in the character of symbolic days they were as truly representative of the lapse of foregone periods of creation

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117 Hugh Miller, Testimony.
118 Ibid., 155.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., 190.
121 Ibid., 196.
122 Ibid., 171.
as the scenery itself was representative of the creative work accomplished in these periods. For if the apparent days occurred in only the vision, and were not symbolic of foregone periods, they could not have been transferred with any logical propriety from the vision itself to that which the vision represented, as we find done in what our Shorter Catechism terms 'the reason annexed to the Fourth Commandment.' The days must have been prophetic days, introduced, indeed, into the panorama of creation as mayhap mere openings and droppings of the curtain, but not the less symbolic of the series of successive periods, each characterized by its own productions and events, in which creation itself was comprised.\textsuperscript{125}

The six days were small replicas of the vast periods presented in the visions of Genesis 1, and, in answering the common objection to the day-age theory based on the fourth commandment, Miller used the scale-model analogy. "The Divine periods may have been very great,-the human periods very small; just as a vast continent or the huge earth itself is very great, and a map or geographical globe very small. But if in the map or globe the proportions be faithfully maintained, and the scale, though a minute one, be true in all its parts and applications, we pronounce the map or globe, notwithstanding the smallness of its size, a faithful copy."\textsuperscript{124}

Miller suggested that Genesis 1 represented a prophecy of the past. This notion provided a key to the interpretation of the text. Just as historical fulfillment is the best interpreter of revealed prophecies which point to events in the prophet's future, so the historical fulfillment of a backward-looking prophecy is the best way to interpret it. That fulfillment is provided by science.

In what light, or on what principle, shall we most correctly read the prophetic drama of creation? In the light, I reply, of scientific discovery,-on the principle that the clear and certain must be accepted, when attainable, as the proper exponents of the doubtful and obscure. What fully developed history is to the prophecy which of old looked forwards, fully developed science is to the prophecy which of old looked backwards.\textsuperscript{125}

In Miller's judgment the geology of his day was sufficiently developed that much light could be shed on the events of several of the days of creation, just as the well-developed astronomy of his day could shed light on the character of day

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 205-6.  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 176.  
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 194.
four. He didn't think that geology was sufficiently advanced that the work of days one and two could be specified with confidence. Thus Miller focussed on days three, five, and six as those to which geology could contribute the most, but he also attempted a preliminary explanation of the other three days.

The first and second days of creation were represented by rocks of the "Azoic period, during which the immensely developed gneisses, mica schists, and primary clay slates, were deposited, and the two extended periods represented by the Silurian and Old Red Sandstone systems."126 During this time the earth's surface and its primitive ocean may have gradually cooled so that the primitive, thick, cloudy atmosphere became less dense. Eventually the rays of the sun struggled through and strengthened "until, at the close of the great primary period, day and night,—the one still dim and gray, the other wrapped in a pall of thickest darkness,—would succeed each other as now, as the earth revolved on its axis, and the unseen luminary rose high over the cloud in the east, or sunk in the west beneath the undefined and murky horizon."127 On the second day, attention was focussed on atmospheric phenomena. To the prophetic eye absorbed in the vision such phenomena would have attracted far more attention than the appearance of invertebrate life of the Silurian period or the fish of the Old Red Sandstone period. Such events would have been "comparatively inconspicuous" to the prophet.

Of days three, five, and six Miller was more confident. The vision of day three was more "geological in its character" than days one or two. "Extensive tracts of dry land appear, and there springs up over them, at the Divine command, a rank vegetation. And we know that what seems to be the corresponding Carboniferous period, unlike any of the preceding ones, was remarkable for its great tracts of terrestrial surface, and for its extraordinary flora."128 The Carboniferous period was characterized by "wonderfully gigantic and abundant vegetation."129 The fourth day, devoted to astronomical features,
was identified with the Permian and Triassic periods geologically.

The fifth day was linked with the Oolitic\textsuperscript{130} and Cretaceous periods.

The grand existences of the age,--the existences in which it excelled every other creation, earlier or later, were its huge creeping things,--its enormous monsters of the deep,--and, as shown by the impressions of their footprints stamped upon the rocks, its gigantic birds.... Its wonderful whales, not, however, as now, of the mammalian, but of the reptilian class,--ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, and cetiosaurs,--must have tempested the deep.... We are thus prepared to demonstrate, that the second period of the geologist was peculiarly and characteristically a period of whale-like reptiles of the sea, of enormous creeping reptiles of the land, and of numerous birds, some of them of gigantic size; and, in meet accordance with the fact, we find that the second Mosaic period with which the geologist is called on to deal was a period in which God created the fowl that flieth above the earth, with moving [or creeping] creatures, both in the waters and on the land, and what our translation renders great whales, but that I find rendered, in the margin, great sea monsters.\textsuperscript{131}

Day six was equated with the Tertiary period. Although "its flora seems to have been no more conspicuous than that of the present time; its reptiles occupy a very subordinate place; but its beasts of the field were by far the most wonderfully developed, both in size and number, that ever appeared upon earth."\textsuperscript{132}

Another prominent advocate of the day-age theory was Arnold Guyot, a Swissborn geographer and geologist who spent most of his professional career at Princeton University. Guyot was a committed Christian completely convinced of the antiquity of the earth. He sought to work out a harmonization between Scripture and geology, and a series of early lectures ultimately resulted in the issue of \textit{Creation}.\textsuperscript{133} Although Guyot recognized that the main point of the Bible was "to give us light upon the great truths needed for our spiritual life,"\textsuperscript{134} nonetheless the "antique document" agreed in its statements with the science of his day. In fact the "history of Creation

\textsuperscript{130} The Oolitic was the equivalent of what today is referred to as the Jurassic period (system).
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 161.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 162.
\textsuperscript{133} Arnold Guyot, \textit{Creation} (New York: C. Scribner's, 1884).
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 4.
is given in the form of a grand cosmogonic week, with six
creative or working days."\textsuperscript{135} The problem for Guyot was to
demonstrate the coincidence of the sequence of events out-
lined by geology with the sequence of events outlined in
Genesis 1.

Guyot devoted far more attention to the "cosmological"
and "astronomical" parts of Genesis 1 than had Miller. For
Guyot Gen 1:2 referred to matter in its primitive condition.
The term "earth" (\textit{\'eres}) "is an equivalent for matter in gen-
eral," and was the "primordial cosmic material out of which
God's Spirit, brooding upon the waters, was going to organize,
at the bidding of His Almighty Word, the universe and the
earth."\textsuperscript{136} Similarly, the "waters" over which the Spirit
brooded referred "to the gaseous atmosphere; it is simply
descriptive of the state of cosmic matter comprised in the
word earth."\textsuperscript{137} These were the same cosmic waters mentioned
in Ps 148:4. Once it was recognized that "earth" and "water"
referred to primordial matter Gen 1:2 became clear.

The matter just created was gaseous; it was without form, for the property
of gas is to expand indefinitely. It was void, or empty, because apparently
homogeneous and, invisible. It was dark, because as yet inactive, light
being the result of the action of physical and chemical forces not yet
awakened. It was a deep, for its expansion in space, though indefinite, was
not infinite, and it had dimensions. And the Spirit of God moved upon the
face ... of that vast, inert, gaseous mass, ready to impart to it motion, and to
direct all its subsequent activity, according to a plan gradually revealed by
the works of the great cosmic days.\textsuperscript{138}

As the great gaseous mass began to move, light developed
and the waters were separated. But Gen 1:6-7 was not re-
ferring to anything as ordinary as the clouds in the sky. Rather
the work of the second day referred to the organizing of the
heavens. "The vast primitive nebula of the first day breaks
up into a multitude of gaseous masses, and these are con-
centrated into stars."\textsuperscript{139} Thus the nebulous masses (galaxies)
of outer space were the heavens of heavens, that is, the waters

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 35-36.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 38.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 63.
above the heavens. In contrast, our own immediate celestial neighborhood consisting of the sun, moon, and nearby stars were the waters below the heavens. The firmament, by implication, meant the vastness of space between our own nebula and those at a far distance.

By the third day the earth was like a cooling star. Chemical interactions within its atmosphere and ocean produced a luminous glow or "photosphere" like that of the sun. The glow diminished as the earth cooled and became more suitable for life. Only the simplest plant forms could appear under these conditions. Guyot wanted to postpone the development of complex plants until day five, but Genesis said that plants appeared on the third day. To deal with this problem, Guyot said,

Is this position of the plant in the order of creation confirmed by geology? If we should understand the text as meaning that the whole plant kingdom, from the lowest infusorial form to the highest dicotyledon, was created at this early day, geology would assuredly disprove it. But the author of Genesis, as we have before remarked, mentions every order of facts but once, and he does it at the time of its first introduction. Here, therefore, the whole system of plants is described in full outline, as it has been developed, from the lowest to the most perfect, in the succession of ages; for it will never again be spoken of in the remainder of the narrative.\textsuperscript{140}

Thus Guyot introduced the idea that the events of the six days might overlap one another.

The appearance of the heavenly bodies on day four had nothing to do with an \textit{ex nihilo} creation at the time. They "existed before, and now enter into new relations with the earth."\textsuperscript{141} Because the earth was self-luminous due to chemical action during its early stages, the light of the sun, moon, and star was "merged in the stronger light of its photosphere, and therefore invisible to it. But after the disappearance of its luminous envelope, our glorious heavens with sun, moon, and stars become visible, and the earth depends upon this outside source for light and heat."\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 89-90.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 92.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 93.
Guyot correlated day four with the production of Archean rocks.\textsuperscript{143} On day five, Paleozoic and Mesozoic rocks were de-
posited with their contained fossils, and on the sixth day
Tertiary rocks were deposited. The boundary between the
Cretaceous and Tertiary periods was thought to occur at the
juncture between days five and six. There was an important
difference between Miller and Guyot in the correlation of
geological events with the days. Miller had assigned day three
to the Carboniferous period in the latter part of the Paleozoic
era, while Guyot did not even begin the Paleozoic era until
day five. Table II compares the two correlation schemes with
each other and with that of Dawson. The concordistic scheme
of the great nineteenth century North American geologist,
James Dwight Dana of Yale University, was nearly identical
to that of Guyot.\textsuperscript{144}

One of the major concordistic works of the nineteenth cen-
tury was \textit{The Origin of the World According to Revelation and
Science}\textsuperscript{145} by J. William Dawson, a great Canadian geologist
from McGill University and a devout evangelical Christian.
Dawson's work spelled out in great detail both exegetical
arguments for his conclusions and scientific interpretations
of a variety of correspondences between Scripture and ge-
ology.

Dawson argued that the days of Genesis 1 must be long
periods of time of indeterminate length. His major argument
centered on the nature of the seventh day. He assumed that
absence of the formula "the evening and the morning were
the seventh day" was an indication that the seventh day had
not yet terminated. The notion was further supported by
appeal to the continued rest of God in Hebrews 4 and to the
nature of God's working on his Sabbath day in John 5. Dawson
also maintained that the lack of rain in Gen 2:5 indicated that

\textsuperscript{143} The term Archean is typically applied by geologists even today to the
oldest known rocks. Such rocks generally underlie other rocks and are typi-
ically though not always metamorphic and igneous rocks. Some of the strat-
ified Archean rocks contain fossil remains of primitive one-celled organisms.

\textsuperscript{144} See, for example, James Dwight Dana, "Creation, or the Biblical Cos-
mogony in the Light of Modern Science," \textit{BSac} 42 (1885) 201-24.

\textsuperscript{145} J William Dawson, \textit{The Origin of the World according to Revelation and Science}
(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898).
the creation days were long periods of time, because it would be absurd that any prominence should be given to a lack of rain if the days were only 24 hours long. 

Why should any prominence be given to a fact so common as a lapse of two ordinary days without rain, more especially if a region of the earth and not the whole is referred to, and in a document prepared for a people residing in climates such as those of Egypt and Palestine. But what could be more instructive and confirmatory of the truth of the narrative than the fact that in the two long periods which preceded the formation and clearing up of the atmosphere or firmament, on which rain depended, and the elevation of the dry land, which so greatly modifies its distribution, there had been no rain such as now occurs.\footnote{Ibid., 142.}

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Correlation Schemes of Major Nineteenth-Century Day-Age Concordists}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Day} & \textbf{Millar} & \textbf{Guyot} & \textbf{Dawson} \\
\hline
1 & Azoic period, clearing of cloudy atmosphere & \text{Primitive nebula breaks up into gaseous masses and stars} & \text{Clouds and oceans separate} \\
2 & Silurian and Old Red periods, development of atmosphere & \text{Earth cools, simple plants only} & \text{Eozoic period, continents} \\
3 & Carboniferous period, lush vegetation emerge & \text{Archean period (equivalent of Miller's Azoic), sun becomes visible as glowing earth loses its luminosity} & \text{Sun condensed, continents resubmerged} \\
4 & Permian and Triassic periods, final clearing of atmosphere & \text{Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras (equivalent of Miller's Silurian through Cretaceous), marine animals and complex vegetation} & \text{Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras} \\
5 & Oolitic and Cretaceous periods, ichthyosaurs, pleiosaurus, birds, pterodactyls & \text{Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras} & \text{Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras} \\
6 & Tertiary land mammals & \text{Tertiary land mammals} & \text{Tertiary land mammals} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
For Dawson, the initial earth was a ball of hot vapor and liquid that had spun out of a primitive solar nebula. "The words of Moses appear to suggest a heated and cooling globe, its crust as yet unbroken by internal forces, covered by a universal ocean, on which rested a mass of confused vaporous substances."\textsuperscript{147} The great deep referred to the atmospheric waters covering the earth, and the darkness of Gen 1:2 was the darkness of outer space "destitute of luminaries." The cooling of the vaporous globe took millions of years and would continue until the "atmosphere could be finally cleared of its superfluous vapors."\textsuperscript{148} The light that appeared on day one "must have proceeded from luminous matter diffused through the whole space of the solar system."\textsuperscript{149} This luminous matter was gradually concentrated and "at length all gathered within the earth's orbit\textsuperscript{150} so that only one hemisphere at a time would be lighted.

At first there was no distinction between sea and atmosphere: "The earth was covered by the waters, and these were in such a condition that there was no distinction between the seas and the clouds. No atmosphere separated them, or, in other words, dense fogs and mists everywhere rested on the surface of the primeval ocean."\textsuperscript{151} Continued cooling led to separation of the waters and the formation of a distinct ocean and atmosphere. The ocean waters segregated into basins as the dry lands appeared as suggested by Prov 8:25, Ps 119:90, Job 9:6, and Job 38:4. Ps 104:5-9 especially referred to the work of the third day.

In whichever sense we understand this line, the picture presented to us by the Psalmist includes the elevation of the mountains and continents, the subsidence of the waters into their depressed basins, and the firm establishment of the dry land on its rocky foundations, the whole accompanied by a feature not noticed in Genesis--the voice of God's thunder--or, in other words, electrical and volcanic explosions."\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 110.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 113.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 157.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 176.
Dawson saw geologist Elie de Beaumont's contraction hypothesis as consistent with the biblical account of day three. Geologists, noted Dawson, have attributed the elevation of the continents and the upheaval and placation of mountain chains to the secular refrigeration of the earth, causing its outer shell to become too capacious for its contracting interior mass, and thus to break or bend, and to settle toward the centre. This view would well accord with the terms in which the elevation of the land is mentioned throughout the Bible, and especially with the general progress of the work as we have gleaned it from the Mosaic narrative; since from the period of the desolate void and aeriform deep to that now before us secular refrigeration must have been steadily in progress.\textsuperscript{153}

Dawson identified the appearance of vegetation on day three with the Eozoic period\textsuperscript{154} (see Table II). Dawson was well aware that in the fossil record well-developed invertebrate animals appear earlier than land vegetation. To evade the force of the difficulty he assumed that many older deposits of fossil plants had been metamorphosed and destroyed beyond recognition. He suggested that during metamorphism the organic material was converted into graphite, i.e., crystalline carbon, a very common mineral in older metamorphic rocks.

Dawson identified the Hebrew word \textit{min} (kind) with biological species. In Deut 14:15 and Lev 1:14 the term was said clearly to mean species, and so Dawson believed that the text ruled out any development hypotheses. Long after the publication of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection Dawson resisted biological evolution.

Each species, as observed by us, is permanently reproductive, variable within narrow limits, and incapable of permanent intermixture with other species; and though hypotheses of modification by descent, and of the production of new species by such modification, may be formed, they are not in accordance with experience, and are still among the unproved speculations which haunt the outskirts of true science.\textsuperscript{155}

On the fourth day the concentration of luminosity in the center of the solar system, that is, the condensation of the

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 184-85.
\textsuperscript{154} The term Eozoic was applied for a term to the very latest Precambrian rocks, rocks that occurred just beneath the stratified Cambrian rocks and that were thought to contain very primitive invertebrate fossils.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 189.
luminous envelope around the sun, was completed. The sun and moon could then become markers for the seasons and years. In earlier periods there were no distinctly marked seasons, and the limits of days and years were inaccurately defined. Dawson suggested that during the fourth day a large portion of the continental landmasses resubmerged because the fifth day was predominantly the day of marine life.

During the third day the extent of terrestrial surface was increasing, on the fourth day it diminished, and on the fifth it again increased, and probably has on the whole continued to increase up to the present time. One most important geological consequence of this is that the marine animals of the fifth day probably commenced their existence on sea bottoms which were the old soil surfaces of submerged continents previously clothed with vegetation, and which consequently contained much organic matter fitted to form a basis of support for the newly created animals.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 365.}

All the animals created on the fifth day were attributed to the Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras. The sixth day belonged to the Tertiary period, the age of mammals. On the latter point he was in general agreement with Guyot.

Brief mention may also be made of George Frederick Wright, the last of the great nineteenth-century Christian geologists. Throughout his long career Wright addressed questions relating to the integration of Christianity and geology. In 1882, in \textit{Studies in Science and Religion},\footnote{George Frederick Wright, \textit{Studies in Science and Religion} (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1882).} Wright noted that he was not impressed with the efforts of other geologists to achieve concord. "In many of these attempts it is difficult to tell which has been most distorted, the rocks or the sacred record."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 365.} Calling Genesis 1 a "remarkable ‘proem’" Wright believed that

it was not modern science with which the sacred writers wished to be reconciled, but polytheism which they wished to cut up root and branch.... When thus we consider it as a protest against polytheism, and an enforcement of the first two commandments, it seems an impertinence to endeavor to find all modern science in the document, however easy it may be for science to find shelter under the drapery of its rhetoric.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 366-67.}
Wright showed that in all the details of Genesis 1 it was affirmed that God was Creator. The sun, sky, animals, and so on were all creatures of the one true God and should not be the objects of worship.

Wright later changed his mind and undertook the very effort he earlier condemned. In *Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History* so Wright confessed that he had dwelt "too exclusively upon the adaptation of the document to the immediate purpose of counteracting the polytheistic tendencies of the Israelites." Upon further reflection he was so impressed by the writings of Dana and Guyot that he saw "in this account a systematic arrangement of creative facts which corresponds so closely with the order of creation as revealed by modern science that we cannot well regard it as accidental." His thumbnail review of the correspondence of Genesis 1 and the order of geology was essentially taken over from the Guyot-Dana position.

3. Nineteenth-Century Concordism--the Flood

Because concordists felt the cumulative weight of geological evidence against the notion of a global deluge that deposited the entire stratigraphic column, harmonistic concerns shifted from the flood to the creation account. Nevertheless the flood played an important subsidiary role in their thought. Here, too, concordists adjusted their interpretations of the flood story to the constraints of the geological data. During the early nineteenth century there was still widespread belief in a catastrophic flood of continental or global proportions even among mainstream geologists and naturalists who were convinced of the earth's antiquity. The presumed effects of that flood, however, had been reduced. For example, William Buckland, who was anxious that geology continue its support for the Mosaic record of the flood, identified numerous superficial gravels, erratic boulders, and broad river valleys dis-

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161 Ibid., 368.
162 Ibid., 370.
tributed widely over northern Europe as the effects of a catastrophic deluge.\textsuperscript{163}

Buckland's proposals regarding the flood encountered opposition on both scientific and biblical grounds. The Scottish naturalist and Presbyterian minister, John Fleming, said that Buckland's flood "occasioned the destruction of all the individuals of many species of quadrupeds."\textsuperscript{164} But that was clearly contrary to the Mosaic account, for Moses expressly stated that some of all kinds of animals were preserved in the ark. This preservation was identified as a preservation of "species": "we have revelation, declaring that, of all species of quadrupeds a male and female were spared and preserved during the deluge."\textsuperscript{165}

Secondly, Fleming maintained that Buckland's deluge was "sudden, transient, universal, simultaneous, rushing with an overwhelming impetuosity, infinitely more powerful than the most violent waterspouts."\textsuperscript{166} Fleming took issue with such diluvial attributes.

In the history of the Noachian deluge by Moses, there is not a term employed which indicates any one of the characters, except universality, attributed to the geological deluge. On the contrary, the flood neither approached nor retired suddenly.... There is no notice taken of the furious movements of the waters, which must have driven the ark violently to and fro.\textsuperscript{167}

Fleming also disagreed about the geological capabilities of the flood. Buckland's flood "excavated, in its fury, deep valleys, tearing up portions of the solid rock, and transporting to a distance the wreck which it had produced."\textsuperscript{168} But if that had happened,

\textsuperscript{163} See William Buckland, \textit{Reliquiae diluvianae} (London: John Murray, 1823 ). Later in his career, Buckland became convinced of the adequacy of the glacial hypothesis to account for the boulders, gravels, widened valleys, and many of the vertebrate deposits. As a result, he manfully recanted his earlier commitment to a catastrophic deluge theory.

\textsuperscript{164} John Fleming, "The Geological Deluge, as interpreted by Baron Cuvier and Professor Buckland, inconsistent with the testimony of Moses and the \textit{Phenomena of Nature}," \textit{Edinburgh Philosophical Journal} 14 (1826) 211.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 212.

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 213.

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
the antediluvian world must have been widely different from the present; lakes, and valleys, and seas, now existing in places formerly occupied by rocks, and the courses of rivers greatly altered. In the Book of Genesis there is no such change hinted at. On the contrary, the countries and rivers which existed before the flood, do not appear, from any thing said in the Scriptures, to have experienced any change in consequence of that event. But if the supposed impetuous torrent excavated valleys, and transported masses of rocks to a distance from their original repositories, then must the soil have been swept from off the earth, to the destruction of the vegetable tribes. Moses does not record such an occurrence. On the contrary, in his history of the dove and the olive-leaf plucked off, he furnishes a proof that the flood was not so violent in its motions as to disturb the soil, nor to overturn the trees which it supported; nor was the ground rendered, by the catastrophe, unfit for the cultivation of the vine. 169

Convinced of the tranquil nature of the flood and of its general lack of substantial geological activity, Fleming commented that he did not expect to find any marks or memorials to the flood. As a matter of fact, if he had "witnessed every valley and gravel-bed, nay, every fossil bone, attesting the ravages of the dreadful scene, I would have been puzzled to account for the unexpected difficulties; and might have been induced to question the accuracy of Moses as an historian, or the claims of the Book of Genesis to occupy its present place in the sacred record." 170

Fleming's tranquil flood theory was not widely adopted. Later concordists who accepted the historical reality of the flood believed that the flood had left significant geological relics. However, the flood was considered to be geographically restricted. Hugh Miller eloquently argued against the geographic universality of the flood and spoke of the "palpable monstrosities" associated with universal deluge theories. In the nature of the case, Miller argued, there could have been no eye-witness to the extent of the flood. If Noah and his family were the only survivors there was no way they could have observed that the flood had been universal. God could have revealed such geographic facts, but then "God's revelations have in most instances been made to effect exclusively moral purposes; and we know that those who have perilously held that, along with the moral facts, definite physical facts,

169 Ibid., 213-14.
170 Ibid., 214.
geographic, geologic, or astronomical, has also been imparted, have almost invariably found themselves involved in monstrous error.\textsuperscript{171} The moral significance of the flood would not be altered by a reduction in its extent. Miller stated that universal language was commonly used in Scripture for more limited events. In many instances it was clear from the text that such a limitation was inherent, "but there is no such explanation given to limit or restrict most of the other passages; the modifying element must be sought for outside the sacred volume."\textsuperscript{172} The flood story fell into that latter category.

Almost all the texts of Scripture in which questions of physical science are involved, the limiting, modifying, explaining facts and circumstances must be sought for in that outside region of secular research, historic and scientific, from which of late years so much valuable biblical illustration has been derived, and with which it is so imperatively the duty of the Church to keep up an acquaintance at least as close and intimate as that maintained with it by her gainsayers and assailants.\textsuperscript{173}

For Miller science showed that there had been no universal flood.

One of the compelling arguments against the universality of the flood concerned the problem of getting animals to and from the ark. Supposing for the sake of argument the validity of the idea that the flood involved elevation of the sea bed and sinking of landmasses, Miller poked fun at some of the inherent impossibilities of the universal deluge.

A continuous tract of land would have stretched,--when all the oceans were continents and all the continents oceans,--between the South American and the Asiatic coasts. And it is just possible that, during the hundred and twenty years in which the ark was in building, a pair of sloths might have crept by inches across this continuous tract, from where the skeletons of the great megatheria\textsuperscript{174} are buried, to where the great vessel stood. But after the Flood had subsided, and the change in sea and land had taken place, there would remain for them no longer a roadway; and so, though their journey outwards might, in all save the impulse which led to it, have been altogether a natural one, their voyage homewards could not be other than miraculous. Nor would the exertion of miracle have had to be re-

\textsuperscript{171} Miller, Testimony, 300-301.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 302.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 302-3.
\textsuperscript{174} Megatherium was a gigantic extinct sloth.
stricte to the transport of the remoter travellers. How, we may well ask, had the Flood been universal, could even such islands as Great Britain and Ireland have ever been replenished with many of their original inhabitants? Even supposing it possible that animals, such as the red deer and the native ox might have swam across the Straits of Dover or the Irish Channel, to graze anew over deposits in which the bones and horns of their remote ancestors had been entombed long ages before, the feat would have been surely far beyond the power of such feeble natives of the soil as the mole, the hedgehog, the shrew, the dormouse, and the field-vole.¹⁷⁵

Though firmly convinced of a local deluge, Miller admitted being on "weak ground" when discussing the location and mechanism of the flood. He suggested that the very large, depressed area of central Asia around the Caspian, Black, and Aral seas might have been the locus of the flood. He claimed that if a "trench-like strip of country that communicated between the Caspian and the Gulf of Finland" were "depressed beneath the level of the latter sea, it would so open up the fountains of the great deep as to lay under water an extensive and populous region."¹⁷⁶ If the area were depressed by 400 feet per day, the basin would subside to a depth of 16,000 feet within forty days and the highest mountains of the district would be drowned. If volcanic outbursts were associated with such a depression of the land, the atmosphere would be so affected that "heavy drenching rains" would have descended the entire time.

Dawson, following Miller, suggested that the flood was a local event and that subsidence of an inhabited land area resulted in large scale flooding and entombment of the pre-diluvian races beneath deposits of mud and silt around the Caspian Sea.

The physical agencies evoked by the divine power to destroy this ungodly race were a subsidence of the region they inhabited, so as to admit the oceanic waters, and extensive atmospheric disturbances connected with that subsidence, and perhaps with the elevation of neighboring regions. In this case it is possible that the Caspian Sea, which is now more than eighty feet below the level of the ocean, and which was probably much more extensive then than at present, received much of the drainage of the flood, and that the mud and sand deposits of this sea and the adjoining

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 348.
¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 356.
desert plains, once manifestly a part of its bottom, concealed any remains that exist of the antediluvian population.  

Wright, too, believed the flood had been a great local inundation of a huge tract of central Asia. To Wright the biblical account "represents the Flood as caused not so much by the rising of the water, as by the sinking of the land. It says that all the fountains of the great deep were broken up." As a glacial geologist, Wright related the flood to glacial action. The removal of enormous quantities of water from the ocean and their inclusion in massive glacial sheets caused redistribution of weight on the earth's surface. The ice sheets depressed the landmasses while the ocean beds were elevated as the load of water was removed. These readjustments led to pressures that reinforced depression of portions of the landmasses. One of the great depressed areas was that of central Asia in which early mankind was living. At the end of the ice age, enormous amounts of glacial meltwater returned to the oceans and also temporarily drowned the great basin of central Asia. The Caspian, Aral, and Black Seas, and Lake Baikal were said to be remnants of that vast depression.

4. Recent Concordism

Since the nineteenth century, Christian geologists became a silent minority. For several decades few harmonizations of Scripture with geological data were attempted. Then in 1977, a sudden flurry of concordist works appeared beginning with my Creation and the Flood. My scheme resembled the day-age proposals of Miller, Dana, Guyot, and Dawson. The geological data were updated, and it was proposed that the events of the six days were overlapping. A diagram illustrated how the days of creation might have overlapped. Genesis 1

177 Dawson, Origin, 256.
178 Wright, Scientific Confirmations, 206.
179 Ibid., 224-29.
180 An important exception to the dearth of concordist literature during this period is B. Ramm, The Christian View of Science and Scripture (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1954). It should, however, be recognized that Ramm spoke as a theologian trained in the sciences rather than as a scientist.
181 Davis A. Young, Creation and the Flood (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977).
was said to contain summary reports of the major activities of each day so that the creative events of each day were not necessarily restricted to that day. For example, bird formation was envisioned as possibly continuing into day six, and the creation of mammals was viewed as being initiated prior to day six and reaching its climax on that day.\textsuperscript{182}

I suggested that the creation of earth on day one referred to a partially organized body not yet fit for life and habitation. The deep was an initial ocean that covered the globe prior to continent formation.\textsuperscript{183} The light of day one had reference only to earth; it was "radiant energy falling on the earth's surface for the first time."\textsuperscript{184} I denied that this creation of light had anything to do with the so-called Big Bang hypothesis.\textsuperscript{185}

The division of waters related to the clouds above and watery oceans beneath; the creation of the firmament involved the development of the atmosphere. The waters accumulated into ocean basins, and continental landmasses appeared on the third day. It was admitted that "some difficulties are readily apparent in correlating Genesis with paleobotany."\textsuperscript{186} The problem was that "different categories of plants seem to have arisen over widely-spaced times."\textsuperscript{187} Like Guyot and Dawson, I noted that Genesis places plants before animals but that geology reverses the order. I suggested that future paleontological work would disclose more information about the origins of plants and that the biasing of early Paleozoic rocks in favor of marine deposits had led us to overlook the possible importance of terrestrial land plants that might have existed earlier than we had thought. After a century of intense paleontological investigation and of day-age concordism, I did no better with the plant-animal sequence than had Guyot or Dawson. Although more open to evolution than Dawson, I nevertheless thought that the expression "after his kind" sug-

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 116-17.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 120.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 128.
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
gested an "independence of botanical classes that is incompatible with the general plant evolution."188

I, too, insisted that the absolute origin of the sun, moon, and stars did not occur on the fourth day. The function of the heavenly bodies with respect to earth was in view. "The point seems to be that at this time the earth comes into its present and final relationship to the sun so that now the sun and moon can serve as time regulators for the earth."189

In 1983, John Wiester published a fine summary of current geological and astronomical findings within the constraints of the day-age theory.190 Wiester said little about Gen 1:2 and linked that verse with the moment of creation or even "before the beginning." He made no effort to identify the great deep. Of this verse he said, "The most we can say scientifically about 'before the beginning’ is that we know nothing about it. The scientific quest has reached a barrier it cannot penetrate. Time and space have no meaning or existence. We must turn to the Scripture at this point."191 Creation therefore began with the pronouncement of God, "Let there be light." This light was identified with the Big Bang of modern cosmology. "Science now fully agrees with the Bible that the Universe began with light. It is time our textbooks reflected the harmony of science with the first creation command in Genesis."192

Wiester attributed the formation of the atmosphere to day two. During its early history the earth went through a molten stage, characterized by segregation of materials in the interior as well as outgassing of volatile substances. The outgassed material separated into seas and a cloudy atmosphere. The waters were gathered into ocean basins and continents appeared. Wiester claimed that the creation of the sun on day four related to clearing of the atmosphere. He suggested that "the primordial atmosphere of carbon dioxide and other smog-like gases had to be purified,"193 and that Gen 1:15 has in view "the transformation of light from the Sun into a ben-

188 Ibid., 127.
189 Ibid., 129.
191 Ibid., 36.
192 Ibid., 45.
193 Ibid., 115.
eficial energy source" for "we do know that scientific history places the appearance of sunlight beneficial to advanced life in the same sequential order as this fourth creation command in Genesis."194

Another recent attempt at concordism is *The Genesis Answer*195 by William Lee Stokes of the University of Utah. Although Stokes worked out a correspondence of cosmic and geological history with the days of Genesis 1, he asserted that the days did not represent figurative periods of time. The days "were not of equal duration and are not intended to be measures of time. They are not the periods, epochs, and eras invented by geologists. Their meaning is celestial and not terrestrial. They are God's divisions of his own creations."196 This view he called the Genesis code. Even though the days were not periods of time, each creative day was said to consist of a period dominated by darkness and a period dominated by light.

Stokes maintained that in Gen 1:2 the original, primitive "earth" was "universal unorganized matter, primitive, basic, and elemental--but with endless potential for future development."197 Since there was no planet yet, neither the deep nor the waters of Gen 1:2 could refer to an ocean. The face of the deep "is to signify that there was a mass, at least a separate entity, with a surface or discontinuity surrounding surrounding the material which God intended to organize."198 The water of Gen 1:2 was water in outer space. Stokes stated that "water exists in the clouds of space and is known to be abundant in areas where new stars are forming. Reasoning and speculating from these facts it may be assumed for the sake of continuing the story that water may be essential to the formation of solar systems like the one to which the Earth belongs."199

194 Ibid.
196 Ibid., 53.
197 Ibid., 30.
198 Ibid., 32.
199 Ibid., 40.
Stokes admitted difficulty in explaining the origin of light. He said that the creation of light on day one was not to be identified with the Big Bang of modern astronomy but to a later stage of development. Thus the Big Bang fireball could have occurred before the six creative days. As the original brilliance of the fireball gradually diminished, the universe approached a period of universal darkness. This darkness was the evening of the first day. "The appearance and dominance of light in the galaxy we call our own would be the 'morning' of the first day."

Stokes' astronomical approach carried over into the discussion of day two. The waters above and below the firmament were waters of space, and the "production of the Firmament is equivalent to events that followed the production of the first light-producing objects of the galaxy." The creation of the firmament was essentially completed when the spiral arms of our galaxy appeared. The waters under the firmament and the waters above the firmament were the two opposite spiral arms of the galaxy! The next step was to explain the evening and morning of the second day. "Certainly a black hole appears to be exactly what is needed for the dark phase of the second day. Here, more dramatically than any other known arrangement, light is separated from darkness. The separation is forceable--light is restrained from escaping."

On day three the waters were gathered together. Stokes proposed that some of the water on one side of the evolving galaxy came together and developed enough material from which to build several solar systems. "The emphasis is on a process that would eventually give rise to the earth." Moreover, "The theme of Gen 1:9 is clearly the emergence of a solid planet from formerly diffuse, unorganized material." The separation of earth from water was identified with segregation of earth from the nebular dust cloud. "The burning process literally 'cleaned up' the solar system by sweeping away the remnants of the nebular cloud. This was the final

200 Ibid., 63.
201 Ibid., 78.
202 Ibid., 82.
203 Ibid., 85.
204 Ibid., 87.
event which brought the planet earth into existence as a separate solid body. The earth had at length ‘come up dry’.

Still further, "the gathering together ‘in one place' seems to be a very acceptable description of the accumulation of matter in a specific region of space that is an essential step in formation of a solar system and also in the formation of individual planets and satellites." As the process continued "it is not difficult to visualize the planet emerging form enclosing mists or clouds. The references to ‘dry land’ or a dry earth is [sic] scientifically very significant. The use of this wording forces the conclusion that the earth was at one stage without surface bodies of liquid water." The darkness of day three ensued as the matter of the spiral arm of the galaxy passed from the luminous region into the dark inter-arm region.

As the dust and gas that had been diffused throughout the solar system were cleared away by solar light, radiation, and wind, the sun became visible. This passage from the obscurity of dust clouds into the clear light of the sun marked the passage from the darkness of evening into the light of morning of the fourth day.

One final work that merits attention is Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth by Robert C. Newman and Herman Eckelmann. Although the primary interest of Newman and Eckelmann was in astrophysics rather than geology, their approach bears on geology. Our authors suggested that "each day opens a new creative period, and therefore each day is mentioned in Genesis 1 after the activities of the previous creative period have been described, but before those of the next period are given." Moreover, the days were "sequential but not consecutive" and "the creative activity largely occurs between days rather than on them." Each day of Genesis 1 was a 24-hour day that introduced a particular creative activity of God. The activity was not confined to that

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205 Ibid., 92.
206 Ibid., 97.
207 Ibid.
209 Ibid., 64-65.
210 Ibid., 74.
day, for each day was followed by a long period of time in which the activity continued. Thus, although the beginning of the creation of vegetation preceded the beginning of the creation of land animals, the appearance of vegetation may have continued after the animals began to appear. "It is not necessary to suppose that the fruit trees ... were created before any kind of animal life, which would contradict the fossil record understood as a chronological sequence. Instead, we assume that the creative period involving land vegetation began before the creative periods involving sea, air and land animals of sorts big enough to be noticed by an average human observer."211 Newman and Eckelmann named their view the intermittent-day view. The 24-hour days of creation were separated by long time gaps of indeterminate length, and most of the creative activity occurred during those unmentioned stretches of time.212

Newman and Eckelmann suggested that in Gen 1:2 "the earth at this point in the narrative is not yet a solid body, but is shapeless and empty, perhaps even invisible. This is an excellent, though nontechnical description of the gas cloud that would eventually form the earth."213 The darkness on the earth was a subsequent darkness that developed as the "shapeless, empty cloud, becomes dark as contraction raises the density enough to block out starlight."214 Similarly the "deep" was equated with "the gas cloud, now a dark, cloudy and unfathomable region of space."215 A large body of ice or of water, a mass of ice crystals, ice droplets, a cloud of water vapor, or even some other fluid would be within the range of usage of the word mayim (waters, Gen 1:2) in Scripture. "All of these would have a surface over which the Spirit of God might ‘move’ or ‘hover’. In agreement with the scientific

211 Ibid., 79.
212 An early exegetical defense of a view very similar to the intermittent-day view can be found in F. Hugh Capron, The Conflict of Truth (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1903) 162-99. A similar view has also been proposed in Alan Hayward, Creation and Evolution (London: Triangle, 1985).
213 Newman and Eckelmann, Genesis One, 70.
214 Ibid., 71.
215 Ibid.
model proposed, a dark nebula would be expected to contain some water vapor.\textsuperscript{216}

As the gas cloud contracted it would heat and begin to glow. An hypothetical observer would first see darkness everywhere and then light,

then some of both after they are separated. From the viewpoint of an observer riding along with the material of the earth as it is being formed, this is just what our scientific model would predict. When the gas cloud first begins to contract, the observer can see stars outside.... Later the contraction becomes sufficient to absorb light from outside the cloud, and the observer within is in the dark ('darkness was over the surface of the deep'). After further contraction and heating, however, the whole cloud lights up and the observer, immersed in light, can see no darkness anywhere ('and there was light'). Then, when the observer follows the equatorial band of gas and dust out from inside the cloud, both darkness and light are simultaneously visible.\textsuperscript{217}

The firmament (atmosphere) formed by degassing of the earth's interior. The sun and other astronomical bodies appeared on day four as the cloudy atmosphere cleared.

In these recent efforts, the flood received scant attention; the focus has been on the interpretation of Genesis 1. My \textit{Creation and the Flood} was the only one of these works to deal with the flood. Only the final chapter was devoted to the flood, and the intent of that chapter was to criticize the global diluvialism of scientific creationism rather than to make positive proposals. The only widely publicized contemporary flood theories available to evangelicals are those of scientific creationism. Small wonder that on the issue of the flood evangelicals are so attracted to that voice; it is virtually the only one speaking among us!\textsuperscript{218}

Selected interpretations of nineteenth and twentieth century concordists are summarized in Table III. Concordists

\begin{itemize}
\item 216 Ibid., 72.
\item 217 Ibid., 73.
\item 218 A variety of local and large regional flood hypotheses have been proposed by such writers as E. K. Victor Pearce, R. E. D. Clark, and F. A. Molony in \textit{Faith and Thought} and \textit{Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute} but none of these is well known to the general evangelical public. Perhaps the most extensive evangelical treatment of the flood from a nonscientific creationist viewpoint is Frederick A. Filby, \textit{The Flood Reconsidered} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970).
\end{itemize}
TABLE III

Summary of Concordist Interpretations of Key Texts in Genesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Gen 1:2</th>
<th>Gen 1:6-8</th>
<th>Gen. 7:11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirwan</td>
<td>Global ocean that precipitates chemicals, heating ocean which then vaporizes to thick darkness; Spirit-evaporation</td>
<td>Atmosphere formed by evaporation during chemical precipitation</td>
<td>Caverns and ocean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckland</td>
<td>Devastated state of world after catastrophe prior to re-creation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Oceanic tides accounting only for surficial gravels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleming</td>
<td>Primitive ocean</td>
<td>Development of atmosphere; deposit of Silurian and Old Red rocks</td>
<td>Tranquil flood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>Matter in primitive condition; gaseous atmosphere</td>
<td>Primitive nebula breaks up into gaseous masses and stars</td>
<td>Depression of central Asia and subsequent flooding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyot</td>
<td>Atmospheric water covering earth</td>
<td>Clouds and ocean segregate</td>
<td>Flooding around Caspian Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Depression of earth by glacial ice and flooding of depressions by melting glacial ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newman and Gas cloud that blocks out starlight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eckelmann</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stokes</td>
<td>Universal unorganized matter and water in space</td>
<td>Opposed spiral arms of galaxy; darkness of sec- day due to black hole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
have been as inventive as the literalists. Gen 1:2 has been interpreted as a global ocean precipitating chemicals and producing a great evaporation, atmospheric water, a simple primitive ocean, primitive matter, a gas cloud, or as the devastated condition of the world after a great catastrophe long after creation. Events of the second day of creation have included formation of the atmosphere by evaporation of the ocean or by outgassing of earth's interior, the segregation of a primitive nebula into stars, and the formation of spiral arms of a galaxy together with black holes. The flood was of continental scale and formed surficial features, it was completely tranquil and left no effects, and it inundated central Asia by flooding of the sea or the melting of glacial ice. The range of suggestions for the interpretation of these and other portions of the biblical text indicates that concordism has not given us reliable answers about relating the text to scientific questions. The Christian concordist still does not know from God's Word what happened on the second day of creation or how the flood occurred. Despite many attempts, concordism has not successfully explained the making of the sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day. Nor has concordism accounted for the creation of vegetation on day three prior to the appearance of sea creatures in relation to the prior appearance of sea life as disclosed by paleontology. As more and more concordist suggestions have been advanced in light of the latest developments in science, one becomes increasingly suspicious that the biblical text has been pressed into the service of a task for which it was not intended. I sense that the Bible does not, even incidentally, provide answers to detailed technical questions about the structure and history of the cosmos. Scripture contains no anticipations about the physical development of the cosmos that awaited the scientific discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth (or future!) centuries to be brought into the open.

Concordism is not only the pet of Christian scientists. Concordism has also been warmly embraced by theologians and exegetes. In the nineteenth century Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, and B. B. Warfield, as well as such Scottish Presbyterian stalwarts as James McCosh, James Orr, and Alexander
Maclaren were kindly disposed toward the day-age theory.\textsuperscript{219} James Murphy and Herbert Morris defended the gap theory in their writings.\textsuperscript{220} More recently J. 0. Buswell, Jr., and Harold Stigers adopted the view that the days of Genesis 1 were periods of time longer than 24 hours.\textsuperscript{221} I suggest that we will be well served if commentators recognize that concordism has not solved our problem of relating Genesis and geology any more than literalism. Commentators should not try to show correlations between Genesis 1 and geology and should perhaps develop exegeses that are consistent with the historical-cultural-theological setting of ancient Israel in which Genesis was written.

\textbf{IV. Conclusions and Suggestions for the Future}

No doubt not all will choose to follow this trail out of the swamp. Those who have done so will need to survey cooperatively the terrain carefully before setting out a new path. In taking stock, I propose that several matters need to be stressed and faced if evangelicals are to follow a path that will lead to satisfactory integration of biblical interpretation and scientific study.\textsuperscript{222}

1. \textit{Literalism and concordism are failed enterprises that evangelicals should abandon.}

A review of 300 years of literalistic and concordistic harmonizations between the biblical text and the results of em-

\textsuperscript{219} For a more comprehensive listing of many prominent theologians and exegetes who adopted the day-age theory see my \textit{Christianity and the Age of the Earth}, 55-67.

\textsuperscript{220} Herbert W. Morris, \textit{Science and the Bible} (Philadelphia: Ziegler and McCurdy, 1871), and James G. Murphy, \textit{A Commentary on the Book of Genesis} (Andover: Draper, 1887).

\textsuperscript{221} J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., \textit{A Systemic Theology of the Christian Religion} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), and Harold G. Stigers, \textit{A Commentary on Genesis} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

\textsuperscript{222} It is not the purpose of this paper to work out the areas of integration. That is the future task of Christian exegetes and scientists working in concert. Nevertheless I suggest that, if a proper integration should focus less on the precise correlation of presumably historical details, it should also focus more on broad biblical principles such as God's providence, the orderliness of creation, and man's role as steward of God's creation that are fundamental to the scientific task.
empirical geological study shows that there has been absolutely no consensus among evangelical Christians about interpretation of the details of the biblical accounts of creation and the flood or about texts such as Psalm 104, Proverbs 8, or other wisdom literature that bear on the creation, the flood, or the physical character of the earth. There has not been a Christian consensus about the identity of the great deep, about the firmament, about the waters above and below the firmament, about what happened on the fourth day of creation, about the sequencing of events and their matching with the geological evidence, or about the nature of the fountains of the great deep. Given this history of extreme variation of understanding of these various elements of the biblical text, it is unwise to insist that the teaching of the biblical text on any of these matters is "clear and plain" or that one's own interpretation is obviously what the biblical text has in mind.

As science developed and new theoretical frameworks were constructed in light of new discoveries, interpretations of biblical data were repeatedly adjusted to match the new understanding of those data. Both details and overall approaches to Genesis 1 or the flood were adjusted again and again. Such adjustments will continue with advances in the physical sciences so long as evangelicals assume that the biblical portrayal of creation gives us a skeletal outline of a scientific history of the planet or cosmos. The result would be still more variations of interpretation of texts from which to choose. We would be farther than ever from approaching an evangelical consensus. Perhaps the time has come to make the adjustment, in light of the extrabiblical evidence, away from the idea that the biblical text gives us a scientifically verifiable history of the planet.

The inability of literalism to provide a satisfactory agreement between the biblical text and geological knowledge can be seen on two counts. In the first place, modern literalistic interpretations of the creation and flood texts yield results that are wildly at variance with geological knowledge. In the second place the wide variation of interpretation demonstrates that we have not yet discovered the proper understanding of "scientifically relevant" biblical texts. Literalism, after 300
years, has failed and no longer provides a fruitful approach for achieving the appropriate biblical view of geology.

Concordism has been unable to provide a satisfactory agreement between the biblical text and geological knowledge. Concordistic efforts have never been able to do justice to the fourth day of creation and to the relative positioning of the third and fifth days of creation in relationship to geological knowledge. On the other hand the variation of suggestions further demonstrates that concordism has not helped us to understand "scientifically relevant" biblical texts any more than has literalism. Concordism, after 250 years, has also failed and no longer may be assumed to provide a fruitful approach for achieving an appropriate biblical view of geology.

It is doubtful that, after centuries of failure, either strategy is going to be effective in the future. I suggest that evangelicals give up the attempt to identify the role of the great deep in terrestrial history, to work out a geophysics of the flood, to settle disputes between theistic evolutionists and progressive creationists about the origin and development of life from studies of the word "kind" or from the arrangement of differing life-forms on days three, five, and six, or to work out the sequence of geological events from biblical data. If evangelicals are to achieve an appropriate understanding of the relationship between biblical texts and scientific activity, then literalism and concordism should be abandoned and new approaches developed.

223 Genesis 1 does, of course, convey the impression of sequential chronology. But even if we do not press the chronology too hard and simply take refuge in a vaguely sequential interpretation of Genesis 1 and a general similarity between Genesis 1 and the events of geology, we still cannot avoid the fact that day four cannot be explained easily in such a way as to allow formation of the heavens long before earth, and thus achieve concord with one of the more thoroughly established scientific conclusions. Moreover, geological evidence makes it clear that marine life preceded land vegetation, contrary to the view of Genesis 1 that assumes sequence of creative events. These severe difficulties suggest that we should at least give serious attention to the possibility that the chronology does not belong to the temporal sequence of events on earth but in some way accommodates human understanding to divine actions that transcend time.
2. The failure of literalism and concordism suggests that the Bible may not be expected to provide precise "information" or "data" about the physical structure and history of the planet or cosmos. Given the wide diversity of available interpretations, it is unlikely that the Bible provides "high quality data" about details of the history or internal structure of the planet any more than Revelation yields "high quality data" about events of the future as in The Late Great Planet Earth. If the Bible does provide such data, we have been totally unable to determine exactly what it is! For example, it is unwise to claim precision for biblical data about the mechanism of the flood in view of proposals about subterranean abysses, vapor canopies, caves, comets, melting glaciers, oceanic tides, colliding asteroids, and so on. We know nothing from the Bible about how the flood started except that water was involved!

The fundamental--and understandable--assumption (one that I made previously) behind the search for "data" or "information" by both literalists and concordists through the centuries is that Moses wrote strictly as a "sacred historian." Thus the creation and flood stories (as well as related wisdom literature texts) have been read as if they were reports providing detailed information with quasi-photographic, journalistic accuracy and precision. And it has been assumed that these events can potentially be recognized, identified, and reconstructed from the effects they left behind by using the tools of geological, cosmological, biological, and anthropological investigations. Such historical reconstruction has been thought to be essentially no different from efforts to reconstruct the historical events of the Roman Empire or Hitler's Third Reich from extant documents and monuments. The failure of literalism and concordism suggests that we may have been mistaken in such attempts.

3. Although the so-called "geologically relevant" biblical passages do not provide data for historical geology in that they are not straightforward reportorial chronicles, they nonetheless bear witness to genuine history.

Even though the creation and flood stories probably should not be read as journalistic reports or chronicles, they nonetheless treat of events. We must reject the idea that the biblical account of creation does not speak of origination and can be
reduced solely to the notion of dependence of the material world on God. Genesis 1 teaches not only the dependence of the world on God but also its divine origination. God did bring the world into being (Heb 11:3). Even though Genesis 1 may not yield a sequence of datable events, we must insist that God did bring plants, animals, heavenly bodies, seas, earth, and man into existence. Any thought of the eternity of matter must be rejected. A bringing into being came about because of God's creative action. What should be addressed by evangelicals is the manner in which Genesis 1 and other creation texts portray God's bringing the world into being.

The flood story of Genesis 6-9 also witnesses to genuine history. The flood story tells us about God's action in this world and cannot be reduced to mere fable. Even though we may be unable to reconstruct a "historical geology" of the flood, behind the flood story of the Bible was an occurrence in the physical world in which God clearly acted in judgment and in grace. The task that lies ahead for evangelicals is to discover in what way the flood event is presented to us in Scripture.

4. In future wrestling with "geologically relevant" texts such as Genesis 1-11, evangelical scholars will have to face the implications of the mass of geological data indicating that the earth is extremely old, indicating that death has been on earth long before man, and indicating that there has not been a global flood.

Evangelicals can no longer afford the luxury of ignoring the implications for biblical exegesis of the enormous mass of extrabiblical data provided by geology, cosmology, and anthropology. It is unwise to proclaim belief in creation and ownership of the world by the sovereign Creator and then ignore the discoveries in God's world. Such an attitude is like receiving a beautiful Christmas package, profusely thanking the giver, and then failing to open the gift--ever. We insult our Creator if we fail to appreciate and appropriate what he has given us in the world.

Nor can evangelicals expect to provide an effective witness to unbelieving scholars in geology, cosmology, biology, and anthropology if we ignore or distort what is known about the world. We place unnecessary stumbling-blocks in the way of an unbelieving geologist if we persist in the claim that the
literalistic approach to the flood is the only legitimate approach. Any geologist knows that a literalistic view of the flood flies in the face of the accumulated knowledge of the past several centuries. Will such a person be led to Christianity?²²⁴

Future wrestling with Genesis 1 and the flood story must come to grips with the mountainous mass of data that indicates that our planet is billions of years old and has undergone a complex, dynamic history. No longer can competent, aware Christian theologians naively insist on a recent creation by taking refuge in the so-called evidences for recent creation emanating from the scientific creationist camp. Those who do so do the Christian community a disservice. No longer can Christian theologians claim that the Genesis story talks about a geographically universal deluge that has left observable, physical remains all over the earth's surface. No longer may we tell our children about the flood in which pairs of penguins from Antarctica, kangaroos from Australia, sloths from South America, bison from North America, pangolins from southeast Asia, and lions and elephants from Africa all marched two by two into the waiting ark. The biogeographical data rule out such migrations of animals. Though it is difficult to make such assertions and very painful for evangelicals to accept them, the evangelical world must face up to the implications of the geological data that exist if we wish to do justice to the biblical text.

The very tempting response that many evangelicals might wish to make is that the geological, biogeographical, and anthropological data have no real force because the present reconstructions of terrestrial history have been made largely by unbelievers who were controlled by world-views that are hostile to Christianity. What is needed, it may be claimed, is for Christians to reevaluate the data and to reinterpret it in the light of biblical principles. Such an assertion may compel those who have little knowledge of the practice of geology, but we delude ourselves by falling back on such an illusory hope. The historical reality is that geology as a science was

²²⁴ I fully sympathize with the deep desire of literalists to achieve a biblical view of geology and to bring unbelieving scientists to Christ. Nevertheless I am persuaded that their basic approach fails to achieve a proper view and also has had a detrimental effect within the scientific community.
developed largely by those who were active evangelical Christians or shaped to some degree by Christian principles. The force of the accumulating data led to the understanding that the world is ancient and that there was no global flood. Christian geologists who loved Scripture and the Lord were repeatedly confronted with new discoveries that could not be squared with the traditional interpretations of the Bible. Christian geologists were compelled by the observations they made of God's world to conclude that there had been no global flood and that their world was extremely old. 

5. The idea of apparent age is an unacceptable way of facing the issue.

There is only one way to avoid the force of geological data regarding the history of earth, but one must be willing to face the consequences. That way is to take refuge in a literalism that insists on a series of purely miraculous, ex nihilo, nearly instantaneous, fiat creations in six ordinary days and that insists on a flood in which the water was miraculously created and annihilated, physical effects were miraculously removed, and animals were miraculously transported to and from the ark.

The result of this view is that any evidence for the elaborate history and antiquity of the earth is purely illusory. On this view rocks are not old; they must be interpreted as indicating appearance of age and history only. Such a conclusion must be applied to all rocks that were formed prior to the beginning of human history. Only of rocks formed since human history began, that is, rocks not miraculously created, may it be said that they contain a historical record that can be reconstructed from internal evidence. All other rocks were miraculously created to look as they do; they did not go through any process. Not only basement rocks composed of igneous and metamorphic rocks, but virtually the entire column of sedi-

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mentary rocks with their enclosed fossil remains must be created in place. Despite scientific creationism's contention that stratified rocks were formed during human history by the flood, the evidence accumulated during the past two centuries overwhelmingly indicates that stratified rocks, as in the Grand Canyon, were deposited long before the appearance of humans. Such rocks, if prehuman, would have been formed during the six days of creation and were therefore created in place. Proponents of this literalism must then be willing to accept the consequence that fossil elephant bones, fossil dinosaurs, and fossil trees are illusions created in place, and that such "fossils" tell us absolutely nothing whatsoever about formerly existing elephants, dinosaurs, or trees.\footnote{227}

If we wish to avoid the force of the geological data in dealing with the flood story we must also take the flood as a purely miraculous event. Physical mechanisms for the source and draining of floodwaters and migrations of animals land us squarely in contradictions and absurdities. Thus we must ultimately conclude that the floodwater was miraculously created and annihilated and that the animals migrated and emigrated from the ark in a purely miraculous way. We must accept, too, the notion that all physical remains of the flood were miraculously eliminated from the earth, because there is no recognizable physical evidence for a global flood.\footnote{228}

\footnote{227} If we choose to explain most of the geological record in terms of miraculous creation of apparent age, then let us be consistent and give up all efforts to appeal to scientific evidence that supposedly indicates that the earth is young. If we want to appeal to scientific evidence, then let us be consistent and willingly accept that the evidence in total overwhelmingly points to long historical development. We cannot have it both ways by appealing to science when we think it supports a young earth and then appealing to apparent age when the evidence suggests antiquity.

\footnote{228} The issue is not whether there have been miracles in history or whether God can perform miracles. It is unquestioned that God can perform miracles and that he has performed miracles, e.g., the resurrection. The issue here is only whether the flood or the whole of the act of creation was purely miraculous. For example, if we postulate that God miraculously brought the animals to the ark and miraculously returned them to their native lands, we could ask why God bothered to put animals on the ark at all. If he wanted to preserve the animals why did he not just miraculously recreate them after the flood?
The idea of creation of the total rock column with an appearance of age is so fraught with problems that it ought to be rejected. Just as no theologian wants to work with a Bible that was suddenly created out of nothing and in which the many evidences of history in its composition were purely illusory, and as no individual wants to regard his life before last night as pure illusion, so no geologist wants to study rocks whose evidences for historical development are purely illusory.

In addition, the idea of creation of apparent age was not a component of Christian thinking until the mid-nineteenth century. The idea, proposed by Gosse\(^{229}\) and currently espoused by scientific creationism, was suggested only as a means of evading the force of geological data while retaining a traditional reading of Genesis 1. So far as I am aware, neither the church fathers nor the Reformers ever held to the notion of creation of apparent age.

The literalistic, apparent-age view of Genesis 1 and the purely miraculous view of the flood story are unduly rigid, for Scripture uses the terms "creation" and "create" in a variety of ways. Although *bara*’ always has God as its subject, the word does not necessarily imply creation *ex nihilo*. The context must determine whether creation *ex nihilo* is in view. Although *bara*’ might imply instantaneousness of effectuation in some contexts, the word does not everywhere demand such instantaneousness. Although in some contexts *bara*’ might not entail secondary causes, process, and providence, the word by no means necessarily rules out secondary causes, process, or God's providential activity in every context. There are many instances in Scripture, for example, in the creating of Israel (Isa 43:1), the creating of the wind (Amos 4:13), the creating of animals (Ps 104:30), and the creating of future generations of people (Ps 102:18), where creation does not involve pure miracle and instantaneousness and does involve providence, ordinary processes, and means. These are not *ex nihilo* creations. It is therefore unwise, given the flexibility of the biblical usage of "create," to insist that creation in Genesis 1 involves only immediate, purely miraculous, instantaneous production.

of every item out of nothing. Capable theologians have maintained otherwise for centuries.

An instantaneously created, mature creation that shows only an illusory history is also inconsistent with the nature of God and of man as God's imagebearer. In the absence of an incontrovertible word from the Lord that he has created an illusion, we must conclude that God would be deceiving us by placing us within a complex world which bears myriad indications of a complicated history that did not actually happen. Mature creation is also incompatible with the character of man as one created in the image of God and given dominion over the earth. God has given us the mental tools with which to make sense of the world and placed us in a world that makes sense. In every sphere of intellectual endeavor we assume the genuine character of the world. Why should the world's past be any different? Why should our intellectual tools be mismatched against an illusory past in an effort which God blessed when he told us to "subdue the earth"?

Creation of apparent age also forces us to conclude that it is impossible to carry out any scientific reconstruction of terrestrial history prior to the advent of humankind. We can study the world scientifically only in terms of known or knowable processes. The past can be reconstructed scientifically only by analogy with what is known of the present. The only history that could legitimately be investigated scientifically would be that history which begins immediately upon conclusion of the miraculous six-day creation. "Prior" to that would be off limits to scientific research. We could only state of anything produced before genuine history began, that it was created and that it bears only an illusion of history. Even terrestrial history that coincides with human history would be

Appeal in favor of the idea of apparent age or mature creation is often made to Jesus' conversion of water into wine in John 2. However, in John 2, the conversion is designated as a "sign" performed in full view of the servants with the result that Jesus "revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him." The same cannot be said of creation or the flood. There were no eye-witnesses to the creation, and the flood story is not presented as a "sign" and the details of the story imply predictable effects of a lot of water!
questionable if a purely miraculous global flood had occurred of which all traces were miraculously annihilated.

If we adopt this approach we are confronted with the problem of deciding exactly, and on compelling grounds, how long real history is. When did creation cease and history begin? Biblical literalists and scientific creationists believe that real history is between 6,000 and 15,000 years long. Thus far, I have seen no compelling argument in favor of any specific date of creation.

Suppose that history began exactly 10,000 years ago. If so, any rock formed within the last 10,000 years could be studied scientifically. We could legitimately talk about the processes involved in the formation of that rock. We could talk about its being an igneous or sedimentary rock. We could legitimately try to decide just when it was formed and whether it was older or younger than some other rock nearby. But suppose we found some rocks that appeared to be older than 10,000 years. Then those rocks must have been created miraculously during the six days. It would be inconsistent with our Christian belief to study them scientifically, that is, to attempt to discover the processes by which they were formed. Even though the rocks might look like lava flows or sandstones, we could not identify these rocks as igneous rocks or sedimentary rocks, for those terms imply processes. We could not even say anything about the relative age of those rocks compared with some other created rocks. We could not, for example, claim that the rocks were 20,000,000 years old while some rocks beneath them were 30,000,000 years old because the world was created 10,000 years ago. Therefore, created rocks are scientifically off limits.

But how do we decide that a rock was created? How do we determine that a rock has an apparent age greater than 10,000 years? How do we decide that a rock may not legitimately be studied by the methods of geological science? The only way that we can possibly demonstrate that a given rock is "older" than 10,000 years, short of a direct biblical revelation which we do not have, is to presuppose the validity of the scientific enterprise and to carry out a scientific investigation of that rock. It is only through scientific argumentation that we can claim that rocks might be 100,000 years old or 16,000 years
old or 2,000,000,000 years old. In order to claim that a rock is "old" and therefore created and that it may not be legiti-
mately studied scientifically, we must study it scientifically. We
must presuppose that which we are attempting to rule out!
Such an approach is clearly destructive of the entire scientific
enterprise. Any approach to creation which entails creation
of illusory history ultimately undermines all scientific effort
and should be rejected by the evangelical community.

6. In view of the complexity of the issues, Christian scholars must
work in community in an effort to arrive at a satisfactory understanding
of the relationship between Scripture and the various sciences.
Too often evangelical scholars have worked in isolated
groups. The theologians have often worked without much
insight into developments within geology or other sciences,
and geologists have often worked independently of theolo-
gians. For example, some of the harmonization schemes that
we have reviewed, particularly the more recent ones, were
developed by scientists working in relative isolation from bib-
lical scholars. It seems to me that evangelicals can no longer
afford to tackle the issue of origins without a lot of cooperative,
interdisciplinary discussion. Evangelicalism will be successful
in developing a fruitful understanding of the relationship be-
tween Scripture and terrestrial history only if biblical scholars
work closely with geologists, archeologists, anthropologists,
astronomers, paleontologists, and historians and philosophers
of science.

We can ill afford to remain in isolated academic enclaves
shouting at one another. Geologists ought to be more cautious
about proposing interpretations of the biblical text on their
own than we have been. In turn, biblical scholars ought to
be more cautious in insisting that geologists reinterpret their
data to conform to some traditional rendering of the text
when they have little idea of the compelling force of those
data. We will have to work together in the future.

7. Approaches to Genesis 1 that stress the contemporary cultural,
historical, and theological setting of ancient Israel are potentially fruitful
and ought to be worked out more fully.

Biblical scholars are, of course, the ones who are qualified
to indicate the direction in which biblical interpretation ought
to go in the future and to work out the details of that program.
Thus I make no original proposals of my own at this point. Some evangelical scholars have already begun to work in the direction that I am suggesting. \(^{231}\)

I suggest that we will be on the right track if we stop treating Genesis 1 and the flood story as scientific and historical reports. We can forever avoid falling into the perpetual conflicts between Genesis and geology if we follow those evangelical scholars who stress that Genesis is divinely inspired ancient near eastern literature written within a specific historical context that entailed well-defined thought patterns, literary forms, symbols, and images. It makes sense that Genesis presents a theology of creation that is fully aware of and challenges the numerous polytheistic cosmogonic myths of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the other cultures surrounding Israel by exposing their idolatrous worship of the heavenly bodies, of the animals, and of the rivers by claiming that all of those things are creatures of the living God. The stars are not deities. God brought the stars into being. The rivers are not deities. God brought the waters into existence. The animals are not deities to be worshipped and feared, for God created the animals and controls them. Even the "chaos" is under the supreme hand of the living God. Thus Genesis 1 calmly asserts the bankruptcy of the pagan polytheism from which Israel was drawn and that constantly existed as a threat to Israel's continuing faithfulness to the true God of heaven and earth.

As a sample of the kind of approach that is potentially fruitful, we might consider Genesis 1 as a preamble to the historical prologue of the Sinaitic covenant as suggested by Kline. \(^{232}\) If so, then Genesis 1 introduces the great divine King who enters into covenant with his people Israel at Sinai. In the first chapter of the Bible we are made privy to the King's council chamber. We see the great King of the universe issuing


a series of royal decrees, bringing the ordered world into permanent being by his all-powerful, effective word. In Genesis 1 the King stakes out and establishes his realm, the sphere of his dominion. The King issues the royal decrees, "Let there be," and the King's will is carried out.

The decrees of the divine King are recorded as a set of "minutes" or "transactions" by analogy with the decrees of earthly kings. Thus we may view the days not as the first seven earthly days or periods of time, but as "days" of royal divine action in the heavenly realm. If we receive an impression of chronology from the chapter, it is a divine "chronology," not an earthly one. Perhaps God's creative work is portrayed in the form of a group of seven days to signify completeness and perfection, thus establishing the weekly pattern of six days of work and one day of rest for Israel as a copy of the divine "week."

God's final royal action is to set up his image in his territory, the created universe. Thus man is set in the earth as God's image and given derived authority and dominion over the King's property.233

Clearly the previous paragraphs present only the barest outline of how Genesis 1 might be viewed. There are many unanswered questions and many details to work out. Moreover, the development of a new approach to the flood will also require the turning over of much new ground. But we cannot let fear of what lies ahead allow us to fall back into the old comfortable approaches and deter us from the task. May God give the entire evangelical community the grace and courage to work together in developing new and deeper insight into the character of his amazing creation and his infallible Word.

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233 I am indebted to Professor John Stek for his thoughts about Genesis 1 and its extensive usage of royal-political metaphor.

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"WE do not read in the Gospel", declared Augustine, "that the Lord said, 'I send to you the Paraclete who will teach you about the course of the sun and the moon'; for he wanted to make Christians, not mathematicians".1 Commenting on these words, Bavinck remarked that when the Scripture, as a book of religion, comes into contact with other sciences and sheds its light upon them, it does not then suddenly cease to be God's Word but continues to be such. Furthermore, he added, "when it speaks about the origin of heaven and earth, it presents no saga or myth or poetical fantasy but even then, according to its clear intention, presents history, which deserves faith and trust. And for that reason, Christian theology, with but few exceptions, has held fast to the literal, historical view of the account of creation."2

It is of course true that the Bible is not a textbook of science, but all too often, it would seem, this fact is made a pretext for treating lightly the content of Genesis one. Inasmuch as the Bible is the Word of God, whenever it speaks on any subject, whatever that subject may be, it is accurate in what it says. The Bible may not have been given to teach science as such, but it does teach about the origin of all things, a ques-

1 "Non legitur in Evangelio Dominum dixisse: Mitto vobis Paracletum qui vos doceat de cursu solis et lunae. Christianos enim facere volebat, non mathematicos" ("De Actis Cum Felice Manichaeo", Patrologia Latina, XLII, col. 525, caput X).
2 "Maar als de Schrift dan toch van haar standpunt uit, juist als boek der religie, met andere wetenschappen in aanraking komt en ook daarover haar licht laat schijnen, dan houdt ze niet eensklaps op Gods Woord te zijn maar blijft dat. Ook als ze over de wording van hemel en aarde spreekt, geeft ze geen sage of mythe of dichterlijke phantasie, maar ook dan geeft zij naar hare duidelijke bedoeling historic, die geloof en vertrouwen verdient. En daarom hield de Christelijke theologie dan ook, op schlechts enkele uitzonderingen na, aan de letterlijke, historische opvatting van het scheppingsverhall vast" (Herman Bavinck: Gereformeerde Dogmatiek, Tweede Deel, Kampen, 1928, p. 458).
an hypothesis which in the opinion of the writer of this article
Bible from the position of being in conflict with the data of
modern science. The theory has found advocacy recently
Utrecht published a work whose title may be translated,
treatment upon which many scientists apparently have little to
say. At the present day Bavinck's remarks are particularly
in order, for recently there has appeared a recrudescence of
the so-called "framework" hypothesis of the days of Genesis,
an hypothesis which in the opinion of the writer of this article
treats the content of Genesis one too lightly and which, at
least according to some of its advocates, seems to rescue the
Bible from the position of being in conflict with the data of
modern science. The theory has found advocacy recently
both by Roman Catholics and by evangelical Protestants.
It is the purpose of the present article to discuss this hypothesis
as it has been presented by some of its most able exponents.

I. Professor Noordtzij and the "Framework" Hypothesis

In 1924 Professor Arie Noordtzij of the University of
Utrecht published a work whose title may be translated,
God's Word and the Testimony of the Ages. It is in many

3 Strack, for example (Die Genesis, 1905, p. 9), wrote, "sie (i. e., what
Strack calls "die ideale Auffassung") hat den grossen Vorteil, dass sie bei
dem Ver. nicht naturwissenschaftliche Kenntnisse voraussetzt, die er aller
Wahrscheinlichkeit nach so wenig wie irgendeiner seiner Zeitgenossen
gehabt hat, und indem sie der Bibel wie der Naturwissenschaft volles
Recht lasst in Bezug auf das jeder eigentumliche Gebiet, hat sie doch
keinen Konflikt zwischen beiden zur Folge". Professor N. H. Ridderbos,
who has written one of the fullest recent discussions of the "framework"
hypothesis entitles the English translation of his work, Is There a Conflict
Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?, Grand Rapids, 1957. The origi-
nal work bears the title, Beschouwingen over Genesis I, Assen.

4 See J. O. Morgan: Moses and Myth, London, 1932; N. H. Ridderbos:
op. cit.; Meredith G. Kline: "Because It Had Not Rained", Westminster
Theological Journal, Vol. XX, No. 2 (May 1958), pp. 146-157; Bernard
Ramm: The Christian View of Science and Scripture, Grand Rapids, 1954,
which gives a useful summary of various views (see pp. 222-229).

5 A. Noordtzij: Gods Woord en der Eeuwen Getuigenis. Het Oude Testa-
ment in het Licht der Oostersche Opgravingen, Kampen, 1924. In "Vragen
Rondom Genesis en de Naturwetenschappen", Bezinning, 17e Jaargang,
1962, No. 1, pp. 21 ff., attention is called to the position of Noordtzij.
The position is described as figurative (figuurlijke), and is opposed by
adducing the following considerations. 1.) The clear distinction between
Genesis 1 on the one hand and Genesis 2 and 3 in itself is not sufficient
ground for assuming that one section is to be taken literally, the other not.
2.) Did the writer of this part of Genesis really desire to make a hard and
respects a remarkable book and contains a useful discussion of the relationship between the Old Testament and archaeological discoveries. Noordtzij has some interesting things to say about the days of Genesis. The Holy Scripture, so he tells us, always places the creation in the light of the central fact of redemption, Christ Jesus. When we examine the first chapter of Genesis in the light of other parts of Scripture, it becomes clear that the intention is not to give a survey of the process of creation, but to permit us to see the creative activity of God in the light of his saving acts, and so, in its structure, the chapter allows its full light to fall upon man, the crown of the creative work.

Inasmuch as the heaven is of a higher order than the earth it is not subject to a development as is the earth. It rather possesses its own character and is not to be placed on the same plane as the earth. The order of visible things is bound up with space and time, but not that of invisible things. Nor does the Scripture teach a creation ex nihilo, but one out of God's will.

That the six days do not have to do with the course of a natural process may be seen, thinks Noordtzij, from the fast distinction between the creation account and what follows? The objection is summarized: "Samenvattend zou men kunnen zeggen, dat het argument: de schepping is iets totaal anders dan het begin der menschengeschiedenis en daarom kan men Genesis 1 anders opvatten dan Genesis 2 en 3, minder sterk is dan het lijkt" (pp. 23 f.).

"Der H. S. stelt het feit der schepping steeds in het licht van het centrale heilsfeit der verlossing, die in Christus Jezus is, hetzij Hij in het Oude Verbond profetisch wordt aangekondigd, hetzij die verlossing als uitgangspunt voor de eschatalogische ontwikkeling wordt gegrepen" (op. cit., p. 77).

"Zoo dikkwijls men echter Gen. 1 beschouwt in het licht van de andere gedeelten der H. S., wordt het duidelijk, dat hier niet de bedoeling voorzit om ons een overzicht te geven van het scheppingsproces, maar om ons de scheppende werkzaamheid Gods te doen zien in het licht zijner heilsgedachten, waarom het dan ook door zijn structuur het voile licht doet vallen op den mensch, die als de kroon is van het scheppingswerk" (op. cit., pp. 77 f.).

"Maar nu is de hemel, wijl van een andere en hoogere orde dan deze aarde, niet aan ontwikkeling onderworpen gelijk deze aarde" (op. cit., p. 78).

"De H. S. leert ons dan ook niet een „scheppen uit niets" maar een scheppen uit een kracht: de wil Gods (Openb. 4:11)" (op. cit., p. 79).
manner in which the writer groups his material. We are given two trios which exhibit a pronounced parallelism, all of which has the purpose of bringing to the fore the preeminent glory of man, who actually reaches his destiny in the sabbath, for the sabbath is the point in which the creative work of God culminates and to which it attains. The six days show that the process of origins is to be seen in the light of the highest and last creation of this visible world, namely, man, and with man the entire cosmos is placed in the light of the seventh day and so in the light of dedication to God himself. What is significant is not the concept "day", taken by itself, but rather the concept of "six plus one".

Inasmuch as the writer speaks of evenings and mornings previous to the heavenly bodies of the fourth day, continues Noordtzij, it is clear that he uses the terms "days" and "nights" as a framework (kader). Such a division of time is a projection not given to show us the account of creation in its natural historical course, but, as elsewhere in the Holy Scriptures, to exhibit the majesty of the creation in the light of the great saving purpose of God. The writer takes his

10 "De schepping is aangelegd op het groote, geestelijke goed, dat zich in de sabbatsgedachte belichaamt. Daarom en daarom alleen is er in Gen. 1 van 6 dagen sprake, waarop de sabbat volgt als de dag bij uitnemendheid, wijd het Gods dag is" (op. cit., p. 81).
11 "dat Genesis 1 het wordingsproces ziet in het licht van het hoogste en laatste schepsel dezer zichtbare wereld: den mensch, en dat met then mensch heel de kosmos gesteld wordt in het licht van den 7den dag en dus in het licht van de wijding aan God zelven" (op. cit., p. 79). Even if the entire emphasis, however, were to fall upon the seventh day, it would not follow that the six days did not correspond to reality. On the contrary, the reality of the sabbath as a creation ordinance is grounded upon the reality of the six days' work. If the seventh day does not correspond to reality, the basis for observance of the sabbath is removed. Note the connection in Exodus 20:8 ff., "Remember the day of the Sabbath to keep it holy," "and he rested on the seventh day."

It should further be noted that the phrase הָיְתָה בָּהָיָה is not used in Genesis 1:1-2:3, nor is there anything in the text which shows that the six days are mentioned merely for the sake of emphasizing the concept of the sabbath. Man, it is well to remember, was not made for the sabbath, but the sabbath for man (cf. Mk. 2:27). Genesis 1:1-2:3 says nothing about man's relation to the sabbath. Man was not created for the sabbath, but to rule the earth.
12 "De tijdsindeeling is een projectie, gebezigd niet om ons het scheppingsverhaal in zijn natuurhistorisch verloop te tekenen maar om evenals elders
expressions from the full and rich daily life of his people, for
the Holy Spirit always speaks the words of God in human
language. Why then, we may ask, are the six days mentioned?
The answer, according to Noordtzij, is that they are only
mentioned to prepare us for the seventh day.

In reply to this interpretation, the late Professor G. C.
Aalders of the Free University of Amsterdam had some cogent
remarks to make. Desirous as he was of being completely fair
to Noordtzij, Aalders nevertheless declared that he was com-
pelled to understand Noordtzij as holding that as far as the
days of Genesis are concerned, there was no reality with re-
spect to the divine creative activity. Aalders then adduced
two considerations which must guide every serious interpreter
of the first chapter of Genesis. (1) In the text of Genesis
itself, he affirmed, there is not a single allusion to suggest
that the days are to be regarded as a form or mere manner of
representation and hence of no significance for the essential
knowledge of the divine creative activity. (2) In Exodus
20:11 the activity of God is presented to man as a pattern,
and this fact presupposes that there was a reality in the
activity of God which man is to follow. How could man be
held accountable for working six days if God himself had not
actually worked for six days? To the best of the present
writer's knowledge no one has ever answered these two con-
siderations of Aalders.

in de H.S. ons de heerlijkheid der schepselen te teeken in het licht van
het groote heilsdoel Gods" (op. cit., p. 80).

13 “Wij kunnen dit niet anders verstaan dat ook naar het oordeel van
Noordtzij aan de „dagen“ geen realiteit in betrekking tot de Goddelijke
scheppingswerkzaamheid toekomt” (G. Ch. Aalders: De Goddelijke Open-
baring in de eerste drie Hoofdstukken van Genesis, Kampen, 1932, p. 233).

14 “1º, dat de tekst van Gen. 1 zelf geen enkele aanwijzing bevat, dat de
dagen slechts als een vorm of voorstellingswijze zouden bedoeld zijn en
derhalve voor de wezenlijke kennis van de Goddelijke scheppingswerkzaam-
heid geen waarde zouden hebben: en 2º dat in Ex. 20:11 het doen Gods
aan den mensch tot voorbeeld wordt gesteld; en dit veronderstelt zeer
zeker, dat in dat doen Gods een realiteit is geweest, welke door den mensch
hun worden nagevolgd. Hoe zou den mensch kunnen worden voorgehouden
dat hij na zes dagen arbeiden op den zevenden dag moet rusten, omdat
God in zes dagen alle dingen geschapen heeft en rustte op den zevenden
dag, indien aan die zes scheppingsdagen in het Goddelijk scheppingswerk
geen enkele realiteit beantwoordde?” (op. cit., p. 232).
Before we attempt to evaluate the arguments employed in defense of a non-chronological view of the days of Genesis one, it is necessary to delineate briefly what we believe to be the nature of the Bible's first chapter. We may begin by asking whether Genesis one is a special revelation from God in the sense that it is a communication of information to man from God concerning the subjects of which it treats. This question has been answered in the negative by John L. McKenzie, S.J. in a recent article. "It is not a tenable view that God in revealing Himself also revealed directly and in detail the truth about such things as creation and the fall of man; the very presence of so many mythical elements in their traditions is enough to eliminate such a view". If, however, this view of special revelation cannot be held, what alternative does Professor McKenzie offer? The alternative, it would seem, is to look upon Genesis one as in reality a human composition, although McKenzie does not use just these terms. According to him Genesis one is a retreatment of a known myth, in which the writer has radically excised the mythical elements and has "written an explicit polemic against the creation myth". The polytheism, theogony, theomachy and the "creative combat" are removed so that now the act of creation is "achieved in entire tranquility".

What then are we to call the first chapter of Genesis after these various pagan elements have been excised? It is not history for "it is impossible to suppose that he (i.e., the Hebrew) had historical knowledge of either of these events" (i.e., either of the creation or the deluge). Nor can Genesis one really be called a theological reconstruction or interpretation. What then is this first chapter of Genesis? Actually

18 But cf. Gerhard von Rad: *Das erste Buch Mose, Genesis Kapitel 1-25*, 18, 1953, p. 36, "es (i.e., the creation account) ist Lehre, die in langsamsten,
it is a story which the Hebrews told in place of the story which it displaced. It is not, however, a single story, but rather represents a multiple approach, and each of its images has value as an intuition of creation's reality. These images are symbolic representations of a reality which otherwise would not be known or expressed. The knowledge of God the Hebrews possessed through the revelation of himself, and in their handling of the creation account they sought to remove everything that was out of accord with their conception of God. They did possess a knowledge of God but, even so, the unknown remained unknown and mysterious. In speaking of the unknown, therefore, all the Hebrews could do was "to represent through symbolic forms the action of the unknown reality which they perceived mystically, not mythically, through His revelation of Himself".  

McKenzie's rejection of the view that Genesis one is a special revelation from the one living and true God is somewhat facile. He brings only one argument against that position, namely, the assumption that there are mythological elements in the first chapter of the Bible.

Elsewhere we have sought to demonstrate the untenability of the view that there are mythical elements in the first chapter of the Bible.

If, however, one rejects the position that Genesis one is a special revelation of God, as Professor McKenzie does, a number of pertinent questions remain unanswered. For one thing, why cannot God have revealed to man the so-called area of the unknown? Why, in other words, can God not have told man in simple language just what God did in creating the heaven and the earth? What warrant is there for the

jahnrundertelangem Wachstum sich behutsam angereichert hat". Despite this sentence, it is not clear that the positions of von Rad and McKenzie are essentially different.

20 K. Popma: "Enkele voorslagen betreffende de exegese van Genesis 1-3", in Lucerna, 30 Jaargang, no. 2, p. 632, speaks of this as exegesis "die haar naam niet meer waard is; t.w. diverse opvattingen van sage, mythe, e.d."
21 Cf. Young: op. cit.
22 In Bezinning, loc. cit., p. 23, the wholesome remark is made, "welke daad Gods, op welk moment in de menselijke historie, is niet to wonderlijk
assumption that the unknown could only be represented through symbolic forms? Furthermore, if the Hebrews were guided in their handling of the creation by the conceptions of God which they held, whence did they obtain those conceptions? Were they communicated in words from God himself, as when he said, "Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45b), or did they adopt them as a result of their reaction to events in the world which they thought represented the acting of God in power? How could the Hebrews know that the conceptions of God which they possessed actually corresponded to reality?

McKenzie's article shows what difficulties arise when one rejects the historic position of the Christian Church, and indeed of the Bible itself, that Scripture, in the orthodox sense, is the Word of God and a revelation from him. As soon as one makes the assumption that Genesis one is really the work of man, he is hard pressed to discover the lessons that the chapter can teach. If the work is of human origination, how can it have a theological message or be regarded in any sense as the Word of God?

The position adopted in this article is that the events recorded in the first chapter of the Bible actually took place. They were historical events, and Genesis one, therefore, is to be regarded as historical. In employing the word "historical", we are rejecting the definition which would limit the word to that which man can know through scientific investigation alone.23 We are using the word rather as including all

om haar enigermate letterlijk in onze taal te beschrijven? Is de vleeswording des Woords, is de bekering van ons hart minder wonderlijk dan de schepping van hemel en aarde?" Those who reject the historic Christian position that Scripture is a special revelation from God and yet still wish to regard the Scripture as the Word of God have no adequate criterion by which to judge the nature of Scripture. Thus, Ralph H. Elliott, *The Message of Genesis*, Nashville, 1961, p. 13, remarks that creation was event, and that it was up to succeeding generations to translate this event into meaning "as they analyzed the event and as they comprehended God". But how can one be sure that they analyzed the event correctly or that they comprehended God correctly unless God himself told them how to do this?

which has transpired. Our knowledge of the events of creation we receive through the inscripturated revelation of God. The defense of this position will be made as the argument progresses. At this point, however, it may be well to note that the New Testament looks upon certain events of the creative week as genuinely historical. The creation itself is attributed to the Word of God (Hebrews 11:3), and Peter refers to the emerging of the earth as something that had actually taken place (II Peter 3:5b). There is no question in Paul’s mind about the historicity of God’s first fiat (II Corinthians 4:6). According to Paul, the same God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has also shined in the hearts of believers. Hebrews 6:7 seems to reflect upon the bringing forth of herbs on the third day, and Acts 17:24 to the work of filling the earth with its inhabitants. Likewise I Corinthians 11:7 asserts that man is the image of God, and his creation is specifically mentioned in Matthew 19:4.

It is furthermore necessary to say a word about the relationship between Scripture and science. For one thing it is difficult to escape the impression that some of those who espouse a non-chronological view of the days of Genesis are moved by a desire to escape the difficulties which exist between Genesis and the so-called "findings" of science. That such difficulties

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24 Commenting on II Peter 3:5b, Bigg, (The International Critical Commentary, New York, 1922, p. 293) remarks, "'Eξ may be taken to denote the emerging of the earth from the waters (Gen. i.9) in which it had lain buried, and the majority of commentators appear to adopt this explanation". Bigg, himself, however, thinks that the reference is to the material from which the earth was made. In this interpretation we think that Bigg is mistaken. What is clear, however, is that Peter is referring to the event in Genesis, as something that actually occurred. I o Peter the event which he describes as γη ἐξ ὠδατος καὶ δι’ ὠδατος συνεστῶσα was just as historical as that which he relates in the words δι’ ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὠδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ὅπωλετο.


26 Cf. Morgan: op. cit., pp. 17-46. The chronological order of Genesis is thought to be practically the reverse of that of geology (p. 36). Morgan mentions four attempts to "effect a conciliation between the postulates of the natural sciences and the Mosaic cosmogony" (p. 36). One of these is described as ingenious, "but it must inevitably prove unacceptable to the scientist" (p. 37). The Idealist theory in its various forms is said to
do exist cannot be denied, and their presence is a concern to every devout and thoughtful student of the Bible.\textsuperscript{27} It is for this reason that one must do full justice both to Scripture and to science.

Recently there has been making its appearance in some evangelical circles the view that God has, in effect, given one revelation in the Bible and another in nature. Each of these in its own sphere is thought to be authoritative. It is the work of the theologian to interpret Scripture and of the scientist to interpret nature. "Whenever", as Dr. John Whitcomb describes it, "there is apparent conflict between the conclusions of the scientist and the conclusions of the theologian, especially with regard to such problems as the origin of the universe, solar system, earth, animal life, and man; the effects of the Edenic curse; and the magnitude and effects of the Noahic Deluge, the theologian must rethink his interpretation of the Scriptures at these points in such a way as to bring it into harmony with the general consensus of scientific opinion on these matters, since the Bible is not a textbook on science, and these problems overlap the territory in which science alone must give us the detailed and authoritative answers".\textsuperscript{28}

It would be difficult to state this approach more concisely and accurately. One manifestation thereof maybe found in a recent issue of \textit{Bezinning}, in which the entire number is dé-

It certainly cannot be expected of any mere man that he possess sufficient knowledge to state accurately the full relationship between Genesis and the study of God's created phenomena, let alone that he be expected to resolve whatever difficulties may appear. A truly humble student will acknowledge his ignorance and will make it his aim to be faithful to the holy and infallible words of Scripture.' Marty of the alleged difficulties, such as the creation of light before the sun, are really not basic difficulties at all, for there are at hand reasonable explanations thereof. And let it be remembered that scientists often adduce as "facts" that which, as a result of further research, turns out not to be fact at all. The treatment of this question in \textit{Bezinning} (loc. cit., especially pp. 16 ff.) is in many respects unsatisfactory and disappointing.

\textsuperscript{27} It certainly cannot be expected of any mere man that he possess sufficient knowledge to state accurately the full relationship between Genesis and the study of God's created phenomena, let alone that he be expected to resolve whatever difficulties may appear. A truly humble student will acknowledge his ignorance and will make it his aim to be faithful to the holy and infallible words of Scripture.' Marty of the alleged difficulties, such as the creation of light before the sun, are really not basic difficulties at all, for there are at hand reasonable explanations thereof. And let it be remembered that scientists often adduce as "facts" that which, as a result of further research, turns out not to be fact at all. The treatment of this question in \textit{Bezinning} (loc. cit., especially pp. 16 ff.) is in many respects unsatisfactory and disappointing.

\textsuperscript{28} John C. Whitcomb, Jr.: \textit{Biblical Inerrancy and the Double Revelation Theory}.

Theory, Presidential Address given at the Seventh General Meeting of the Midwestern Section of the Evangelical Theological Society, May 4, 1962, Moody Bible Institute.
voted to the subject, "Questions Concerning Genesis and the Sciences". In the introduction to this work we are told that a conflict between Genesis and science can only be avoided when we maintain that the Bible is not a textbook of science but "salvation-history", and that the writers of the Bible spoke with the language and in the pictures of their time.

What strikes one immediately upon reading such a statement is the low estimate of the Bible which it entails. Whenever "science" and the Bible are in conflict, it is always the Bible that, in one manner or another, must give way. We are not told that "science" should correct its answers in the light of Scripture. Always it is the other way round. Yet this is really surprising, for the answers which scientists have provided have frequently changed with the passing of time. The "authoritative" answers of pre-Copernican scientists are no longer acceptable; nor, for that matter, are many of the views of twenty-five years ago.

To enter into a full critique of this thoroughly unscriptural and, therefore, untenable position, would be out of place in the present article. There is, however, one consideration that must be noted, namely, that the approach which we are now engaged in discussing is one which leaves out of account the noetic effects of sin. It is true that the heavens declare the glory of God, but the eyes of man's understanding, blinded by sin, do not read the heavens aright. The noetic effects of sin lead to anti-theistic presuppositions and inclinations. We must remember that much that is presented as scientific fact

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30 "Een conflict tussen Genesis en wetenschap kan natuurlijk in ieder geval worden vermeden wanneer men vasthoudt dat de Bijbel geen handboek is voot natuurwetenschap, maar Heilshistorie, en dat volgens het woord van Calvijn, God in de H. Schrift tot ons spreekt als een moeder tot haar kinderen" (op. cit., p. 2). Cf. Herman Ridderbos' discussion, "Belangrijke publikatie" in Gereformeerd Weekblad, Zeventiende Jaargang, Nr. 40, p. 314, and the valuable remarks of Visee, in Lucerna, loc. cit., pp. 638-639. Particularly timely is his comment, "De Schrift verhaalt ons heilsfeiten, maar deze waarheid houdt ook in dat we hier met feiten to doen hebben" (p. 639).
is written from a standpoint that is hostile to supernatural Christianity.

In the nature of the case God's revelation does not conflict with itself. His revelation in nature and that in Scripture are in perfect accord. Man, however, is a rational creature, and needs a revelation in words that he may properly understand himself and his relation to the world in which he lives. Even in his unfallen state, God gave to Adam a word-revelation, for by his very constitution as an intellectual being, man must have such. The word-revelation, therefore, must interpret revelation in nature. Fallen man must read general revelation in the light of Scripture, else he will go basically astray. Of course the Bible is not a textbook of science, but the Bible is necessary properly to understand the purpose of science. Perhaps one may say that it is a textbook of the philosophy of science. And on whatever subject the Bible speaks, whether it be creation, the making of the sun, the fall, the flood, man's redemption, it is authoritative and true. We are to think God's thoughts after him, and his thoughts are expressed in the words of Scripture. When these thoughts have to do with the origin of man, we are to think them also. They alone must be our guide. "Therefore", says Calvin, "while it becomes man seriously to employ his eyes in considering the works of God, since a place has been assigned him in this most glorious theatre that he may be a spectator of them, his special duty is to give ear to the Word, that he may the better profit". And what Calvin so beautifully states, God himself had already made known to us through the Psalmist, "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130).

By way of summary we may state the three basic considerations which will undergird the position adopted in this article.

1. Genesis one is a special revelation from God.
2. Genesis one is historical; it relates matters which actually occurred.
3. In the nature of the case, general revelation is to be interpreted by special revelation, nature by Scripture, "science" by the Bible.

\[32\text{ Institutes of the Christian Religion, Grand Rapids, 1953, I:vi:2, p. 66, translated by Henry Beveridge.}\]
III. Evaluation of Arguments used to Defend the "Framework" Hypothesis

1. The Use of Anthropomorphic Language

In defense of the non-chronological hypothesis it is argued that God speaks anthropomorphically. "Is ... the author not under the necessity", asks Professor N. H. Ridderbos, "of employing such a method, because this is the only way to speak about something that is really beyond all human thoughts and words?" And again, "Does the author mean to say that God completed creation in six days, or does he make use of an anthropomorphic mode of presentation?"

If we understand this argument correctly, it is that the mention of six days is merely an anthropomorphic way of speaking. We are not to interpret it, as did Luther and Calvin, to mean that God actually created in six days, but merely to regard it as an anthropomorphic mode of speech. Genesis 2:7, for example, speaks of God forming the body of man of dust from the ground, but this does not mean that God acted as a potter, nor does Genesis 3:21 in stating that God clothed Adam and his wife mean to say that God acted as a "maker of fur-clothes". Again, when we are told that God rested (Genesis 2:2) are we to infer that "God had to exert Himself to create the world?"

It is of course true that the term "anthropomorphism" has often been employed with reference to such phrases as "the mouth of the Lord", "and God said", "and God saw", and other similar expressions. It is certainly true that God did not

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34 Is There A Conflict Between Genesis 1 And Natural Science?, p. 30 (hereafter abbreviated Conflict). Ridderbos gives three examples of "anthropomorphisms".
36 A series of penetrating articles on the question of anthropomorphism by G. Visee appeared in De Reformatie (28e Jaargang, Nos. 34-43, 1953) under the title "Over het anthropomorphe spreken Gods in de heilige Schrift". He concludes that to talk of an "anthropomorphic" revelation in the usual sense of the word is not justifiable, and that it is better not to use the term. In Lucerna (loc. cit., pp. 636 f.) he writes, "Ik ontken on bestrijd heel de idee van een „anthropomorphe" openbaring. God heeft
speak with physical organs of speech nor did he utter words in the Hebrew language. Are we, however, for that reason, to come to the conclusion that the language is merely figurative and does not designate a specific divine activity or reality?

If we were so to conclude we would not be doing justice to the Scriptures. The phrases which have just been quoted are not devoid of significance and meaning. Rather, the statement, "and God said", to take one example, represents a genuine activity upon the part of God, a true and effectual speaking which accomplishes his will. There are at least two reasons which substantiate this conclusion. In the first place genuine content is attributed to God's speaking, namely, the words, "Let there be light". This is strengthened by the remarkable usage which Paul makes of the passage in II Corinthians 4:6a. In the second place, that which God speaks brings his will to pass. It is powerful and efficacious. "For he spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9); "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3a). These passages teach that the Word of God is efficacious.

van het begin der wereld aan in mensentaal gesproken en gezegd wat Hij to zeggen had in de taal, welker vorming hij blijkens Genesis 2:19 opzettelijk aan de mens had overgelaten".

With respect to the words "and God saw", Keil comments that it "is not an anthropomorphism at variance with enlightened thoughts of God; for man's seeing has its type in God's, and God's seeing is not a mere expression of delight of the eye or of pleasure in His work, but is of the deepest significance to every created thing, being the seal of the perfection which God has impressed upon it, and by which its continuance before God and through God is determined" (Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, 1949, Vol. I, p. 50).

According to Paul, the content of God's speaking (ὅ ἐπιλόυ) is found in the words ἐκ σκότους φῶς λαμψει. In this remarkable utterance Paul also emphasizes the distinction between light and darkness. Perhaps a reflection of the truth that God spoke is found on the Shabaka stone, in which Atum's coming into being is attributed to the heart and tongue of Ptah. Cf. James Pritchard: Ancient Near Eastern Texts, Princeton, 1950, p. 5a.

Cf. also Deut. 8:3; I Kg. 8:56; Ps. 105:8; 119:50; 147:15; Isa. 45:23; 55:11 ff.; Matt. 24:35; Lk. 4:32; 24:19; Heb. 4:12; I Pet. 1:23; II Pet. 3:5. In these passages it is well to note the connection between word and deed. The word is powerful and accomplishes the purpose for which it was spoken. It is also necessary, however, to note that there is no power re-
Hence, whatever be the term that we employ to characterize such a phrase as "and God said", we must insist that the phrase represents an effectual divine activity which may very properly be denominated "speaking".\textsuperscript{40}

It is necessary, however, to examine the extent of "anthropomorphism" in the passages adduced by Professor Ridderbos. If the term "anthropomorphic" may legitimately be used at all, we would say that whereas it might apply to some elements of Genesis 2:7, it does not include all of them. In other words, if anthropomorphism is present, it is not present in each element of the verse. The words "and God breathed" may be termed anthropomorphic,\textsuperscript{41} but that is the extent to which the term may be employed. The man was real, the dust was real, the ground was real as was also the breath of life. To these elements of the verse the term "anthropomorphism" cannot legitimately be applied. Nor can everything in Genesis 3:21 be labeled with the term "anthropomorphic". We need but think, for example, of the man and the woman and the coats of skin.

What, then, shall we say about the representation of the first chapter of Genesis that God created the heaven and

siding in the word conceived as an independent entity divorced from God. God's Word is powerful because God himself gives power to it, and brings to pass what he has promised. If the same "Word" were spoken by anyone other than God, it would not accomplish what it does when spoken by him.

\textsuperscript{40} At the same time we cannot state specifically what this speaking of God is. There is an infinite difference between God's speaking and man's. Although both may legitimately be designated "speaking", yet they cannot be identified, for man as a finite being speaks as a creature; the speaking of God on the other hand is that of an infinite being.

\textsuperscript{41} The phrase "and God formed" is not merely figurative and devoid of meaning. Although with physical hands God did not form the body of Adam, nevertheless, God did produce Adam's body from the dust in such a way that his action may accurately be designated a "forming". Even the words "and God breathed" indicate a definite action on God's part. The divine breathing was not accomplished by means of physical, material organs. It was a divine, not a human, breathing. Although the term "anthropomorphic" may be applied to the phrase "and God breathed", nevertheless, the phrase is not empty of content. This is true, even though one cannot state precisely what the divine breathing was. Cf. Visee, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 636 f.
the earth in six days? Is this anthropomorphic language? We would answer this question in the negative, for the word anthropomorphic, if it is a legitimate word at all, can be applied to God alone and cannot properly be used of the six days. In speaking of six days Moses may conceivably have been employing figurative, literal, or poetical language, but it was not anthropomorphic. Hence, we do not believe that it is accurate to speak of the six days as an anthropomorphic mode of expression.

From the presence of "anthropomorphic" words or expressions in Genesis one, it does not follow that the mention of the days is anthropomorphic nor does it follow that the days are to be understood in a topical or non-chronological order rather than chronologically. If the days are to be interpreted non-chronologically, the evidence for this must be something other than the presence of anthropomorphisms in the first chapter of Genesis. The occurrence of anthropomorphic language in Genesis one in itself, if such language really does occur, sheds no light one way or another upon the question whether the days are to be understood topically or chronologically. For that matter even the presence of figurative language or of a schematic arrangement, taken by themselves, would not warrant the conclusion that the days were not chronological.

2. The Appeal to Genesis 2:5

One of the strongest arguments in favor of a nonchronological order of the days is thought to be found in an appeal to Genesis 2:5. The presupposition of this verse, it is held, is that during the period of creation divine providence was in operation "through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day". If in Genesis 2:5 ff. there is embedded the principle that God's providence during the creation period operated in the same manner as it does at the present time, then the view that the days of Genesis one were twenty-four hours in length would

scarcely be tenable. For, to take an example, if the third day began with an earth covered with water and then in the course of that day dry land emerged, the evaporation would have to take place at such a rate of speed that it would not be the normal ordinary working of divine providence. Even if the days be regarded as longer than twenty-four hours, so the argument runs, difficulty appears, for then we must hold that there was vegetation without the sun.

The question to be considered is whether upon the basis of Genesis 2:5 we are justified in believing that the method in which divine providence operated during the creation period was the same as that in effect at present. To answer this question it is necessary to consider briefly the relation of Genesis 1 and 2. In the first place Genesis two is not, nor does it profess to be, a second account of creation. Although it does mention creative acts, it is a sequel to the creation narrative of Genesis one and a preparation for the history of the fall contained in chapter 3. This is proved by the phrase "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 2:4a).

To understand the significance of this phrase we must note the word תֹּלְדָּיָת in which is obviously derived from דָּלַי, "to bear", and in the Hiph'il stem with which it is related, the meaning is "to beget". The תֹּלְדָּיָת therefore are "those things which are begotten", and Genesis 2:4a should then be translated literally, "These are the things begotten of heaven and earth". The section of Genesis beginning with 2:4 is an

44 This statement is made in the light of the constant affirmations to the contrary. Thus, Ralph H. Elliott: op. cit., p. 28 speaks of "The First or Priestly Account of Creation (1:1 to 2:4a)" and "The Second Creation Account (2:4b-25)" (p. 41). Perhaps it is an encouraging sign that von Rad labels 2:4b-25 "Die jahwistische Geschichte von Paradies" (Das erste Buch Mose, Gottingen, 1953, p. 58). The English translation renders "The Yahwistic Story of Paradise" (Genesis, Philadelphia, MCMLXI, translated by John H. Marks, p. 71). On the other hand the following comment of von Rad is very disappointing, "Die kosmologischen Vorstellungen, von denen unser jahwistischer Schopfungsbericht ausgeht, sind also sehr verschieden von denen, die uns bei P. begegnet sind und müssen aus einem ganz anderen Überlieferungskreis stammen" (op. cit., p. 61). Once, however, we abandon the untenable documentary hypothesis and recognize the true nature of Genesis, we can understand the proper relationship between the first and second chapters.
account of those things which are begotten of heaven and earth. This is not to say that it is silent on the subject of the heaven and earth themselves, but it is not an account of their origin. It deals rather with what was begotten of them, namely, man, whose body is of the earth and whose soul is of heavenly origin, inbreathed by God himself.

It is necessary to examine more closely the usage of this phrase in Genesis. Genesis is divided into two great sections I. The Creation of Heaven and Earth, and II. The Generations. The second section is again subdivided into ten sections each being introduced with the word נְדוּדֶהַק. In each case this word indicates the result or product, that which is produced. With the genitive, however, in this case "the heavens and the earth", Moses refers to a point of beginning. In Genesis 11:27, for example, we read, "these are the generations of Terah". This does not mean that we are now introduced to an account of Terah; rather, the account of Terah is completed. There may, indeed, be certain statements about Terah to follow, but the section before us is concerned with an account of those begotten of Terah, in this case, Abraham.

Genesis 2:4 in effect declares that the account of the creation

45 Skinner (The International Critical Commentary, Genesis, New York, 1925, p. 40) states that it is doubtful whether the word נְדוּדֶהַק can bear the meaning "origin". Driver (The Book of Genesis, London, 1926, p. 19) asserts that "generations" is applied metaphorically to "heaven and earth" and denotes the things which "might be regarded metaphorically as proceeding from them, . . . i. e., just the contents of ch. 1". Such, however, is not the force of the phrase.

It is practically an axiom of modern negative criticism that 2:4a belongs to the so-called P document. What follows, however, is said to be JE. Hence, it is claimed, 2:4a cannot be a superscription to 2:4b ff. Von Rad (op. cit., p. 49) candidly acknowledges this. But why may not Moses have employed previously existing documents and himself have united them by means of the phrase נְדוּדֶהַק? Is there any reason why 2:4a cannot serve as a superscription to the second section of Genesis? Why in the interests of a supposed diversity of documents destroy a fundamental unity as clear-cut and beautiful as that which underlies the structure of Genesis?


47 This phrase has been most competently discussed in recent times by B. Holwerda: Dictaten, Deel I, Historia Revelationis Veteris Testamenti, Eerste Aflevering, Kampen, 1954, pp. 9-17.
of heaven and earth is completed, and that the author is now going to focus his attention upon what was begotten of heaven and earth, namely, man. It is in the light of this fact that Genesis 2:5 is to be understood. The primary reference of this verse is to man, not to the creation, and the purpose of chapter 2 is to manifest the goodness of God in giving to man a paradise for his earthly dwelling. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). Although the earth is the Lord's and although he might cause man to dwell on it where he would, nevertheless he prepared a wondrous garden for his guest. To emphasize the beauty of the garden, but above all the goodness of God, a contrast is introduced. Man is to dwell as God's guest not in a waterless waste, but in a planted garden. The waterless ground of Genesis 2:5 stands in contrast to the well-watered Paradise which is to be man's earthly home.

Two reasons are given why plants had not yet grown. On the one hand it had not rained, and on the other there was no man to till the ground. The garden cannot be planted until the ground has been watered, nor can it be tended until man is on hand. Both of these reasons, therefore, look forward to man's home, the garden, and to the one who is to inhabit that garden. At this point, however, an exegetical question arises. Does Genesis 2:5 intend to state that the entire earth was barren, or is its purpose rather to show that in contrast to a waterless waste, the abode of man was to be a garden? Perhaps this question cannot be settled entirely, and it is the part of wisdom not be dogmatic, although the latter alternative has much to commend it.

48 The theme of refreshing waters is carried throughout Scripture. In particular we may note Exodus 17:6; Ps. 65:9; Prov. 21:1; Isa. 12:3; 32:2; Jn. 4:10 ff., 7:38; Rev. 21:6; 22:1, 17. Visee makes a pertinent comment (loc. cit., p. 638), "Genoemde gegevens weerspreken elke gedachte als zou het in deze hoofdstukken verhaalde passen in een, primitief milieu, een door de cultuur nog niet opengelegd en onontslagen gebied". T. C. Mitchell ("Archaeology and Genesis I-XI", Faith and Thought, Vol. 91, No. 1, Summer 1959, pp. 28-49) gives an interesting discussion of this question.

49 Some commentators assume that the reference is to the entire earth. Procksch, however (Die Genesis ubersetzt and erklart, Leipzig, 1913, p. 21), states that "das Weltbild ist bier dem Steppenlande entnommen". ノノ, is "not 'the widespread plain of the earth, the broad expanse of land,'
Whichever of these positions we adopt, we may note that the fulfillment of at least one of the two requirements necessary for plant growth could have been accomplished by ordinary providence. If, as is sometimes held, the watering of the ground was the work of subterranean waters, did they water but a field of arable land, soil fit for cultivation which forms only a part of the ‘earth’ or ‘ground.’ "The creation of the plants is not alluded to here at all, but simply the planting of the garden in Eden" (Keil: op. cit., p. 77). "All the faces of the ground" is also said to be a phrase which "ist auch hier nicht die gesamte Erdfläche (YAK), sondern nur das anbaufähige Erdreich" (Procksch: op. cit., p. 22).

50 The various interpretations of 'h may be found in Kline: op. cit., p. 150. König (Die Genesis eingeleitet, übersetzt und erklärt, Gütersloh, 1925, pp. 198-200) is one of the strongest defenders of the view that iM means mist (Dunst), for he thinks that the rising of a mist is a natural preparation for rainfall. "Denn selbstverständlich ist gemeint, dass der aufsteigende Wasserdunst sich wieder als Regen gesenkt habe" (p. 199). König thinks that it is a wrong method to derive the meaning of a Hebrew word directly from the Babylonian. edu, therefore, is not to determine the meaning of 7X. Aalders (op. cit., p. 114) also adopts this position.

He asserts that the mist (damp) arose from the earth, which could hardly be said of a flood. In Job 36:27 the meaning "flood" is thought not to be suitable. In the formation of the rain clouds, says Aalders, despite the difficulties of Job 36:27, "mist" is understandable, but not "flood".

It should be noted, however, that none of the ancient versions rendered this word as "mist". Thus, LXX, πηγή; Aquila, ἐπιβλαυσμός; Vulgate, fons; Syriac XXXXX. What really rules out the rendering "rain" or "mist" is the verb ḫqAw;hiv; which arises from the ground. Obviously, a mist which arises may moisten the ground, but how can it, inasmuch as it comes up from the earth, cause the earth to drink? The translation "mist" must be abandoned. Albright's suggestion ("The Predeuteronomic Primeval", Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 58, 1939, p. 102) that the word 7X be traced to the Id, the subterranean source of fresh water, has much to commend it. All mythological or polytheistic associations, however, are completely missing in Genesis 2:5. In support of Albright's position appeal may be made to Samuel N. Kramer: Enki and Ninhursag, New Haven, 1945, p. 13, lines 45, 46, "`mouth whence issues the water of the earth,' bring thee sweet water from the earth". Even if we adopt the view that 7X means "mist" or "cloud" and that the reference is to a mist which arises from the ground and returns to water it in the form of rain, that does not prove that ordinary providential activity prevailed on the third day. On the third day there were two works, and both were creative works, namely:

1. FIAT - FULFILLMENT (Gathering of the waters into one place and appearance of the dry land).

2. FIAT - FULFILLMENT (Earth sending forth grass, etc.).

If Genesis 2:6 is to be fitted in here, it obviously must fall between the
the entire surface of the globe? If they did, then such a work, while not the method that God today employs to water the whole earth, nevertheless may have been a providential work. To water the ground, therefore, may have been accomplished by a *modus operandi* similar to that by which God today works in his providential activity. Nevertheless, it was a unique act, and one never to be repeated. If it was a providential work, it was unique and distinct, for God has never again watered the entire earth in this manner. If, on the other hand, the הָיוֹת here has a somewhat restricted sense, as is probably the case, then we certainly cannot in any sense appeal to this verse for help in the interpretation of Genesis one, for in this case the verse merely emphasizes that the paradise was planted in what once was wasteland.\(^\text{51}\)

In the second place, the fulfillment of the need for man to cultivate the garden was not met by means of ordinary providential working. To meet this need there was special supernatural activity, namely, the divine forming and the divine inbreathing.\(^\text{52}\)

What relationship, then, does Genesis 2:5ff. sustain to the third day of creation mentioned in Genesis one? If Genesis first and second fiat. Activity by means of "fiat" creation however, is not the *modus operandi* of divine providence. If, therefore, divine providential activity was introduced after the accomplishment of the first fiat, it was interrupted again by the second fiat and its fulfillment. Even, therefore, if Genesis 2:5ff. could be made to show that divine providence was present during the third day, what is stated of the third day in Genesis 1 makes it clear that divine providence did not prevail during the third day.

\(^{51}\) It is well to note the distinction between הָיוֹת and קְרָא, which is found in this section. Whereas קְרָא refers to the earth generally, הָיוֹת is the ground upon which man dwells. The הָיוֹת is more restricted in reference than קְרָא, and it is also that ground which produces the sustenance that will sustain the life of מִדָּאָא and which מִדָּאָא must cultivate. Procksch comments, "מרָא und הָיוֹת sind aufeinander angewiesen, der Mensch ist dem Wesen nach Bauer" (op. cit., p. 22), but such a conclusion does not necessarily follow.

\(^{52}\) In the following comment Gunkel presses the language of Scripture in an unwarrantable manner: "Diese Zeit weiss noch nichts von dem Supernaturalismus der spateren Epoche, sondern sie erzahlt unbefangen, dass "Gott Jahve" seine Geschopfe "formte", d.h. sie mit seinen eigenen Minden bildete, wie der Topfer den Ton knetet" (Die Urgeschichte and die Patriarchen, Gottingen, 1921 (Die Schriften des Alten Testaments, 1/1, p. 55)).
2:5 has reference to the entire globe, it applies to the third day and merely describes the "dry land" of the third day. But if that be the case, the verse does not show that the present *modus operandi* of divine providence, while it may have been present, necessarily prevailed on the third day. At the most it teaches that God watered the ground by means of an *יְהָא* that kept rising from the earth. If, on the other hand, Genesis 2:5ff. simply describes the preparation of the garden of Eden, it may not be applicable at all to the third day, but may rather be fitted into the sixth day. While there are difficulties in the interpretation of the verse, it is clear that it cannot be used to establish the thesis that the present *modus operandi* of divine providence prevailed during the third day. At most it shows that such a mode may have been present.

The appeal to Genesis 2:5a, it must be remembered, to establish the thesis that during the days of creation the *modus operandi* of divine providence was the same as is at present in effect, can only have validity if it proves that there was no supernatural intrusion such as might be found, for example, in the working of miracles. But such supernatural intrusion was certainly present in the creation of man (Gen. 2:7).

And the only works ascribed to the third day are creative works, not those of ordinary divine providence. Indeed, on no viewpoint can it be established that ordinary providential working *prevailed* on the third day. The only works assigned to this day were the result of special, divine, creative fiats. If ordinary providence existed during the third day, it was

53 The force of *יְהָא* must be noted. Delitzsch takes it as indicating a single action "normirt durch den historischen Zusammenh. in Imperfectbe-deutung" (*Commentar uber die Genesis*, Leipzig, 1860, p. 140). Tuch, however (*Commentar uber die Genesis*, Halle, 1871, p. 52) takes the verb as in verse 10, and Isa. 6:4 "von der werdenden, allmalig erst geschehenden Handlung". The latter is a more accurate representation of the Hebrew. Driver believes that the imperfect has frequentative force, "used to go up" (*A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, Oxford, MDCCCXCII, p. 128). Gesenius, Kautzsch, Cowley state that the imperfect here expresses an action which continued throughout a longer or shorter period, "a mist went up, continually" (*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford, 1910, p. 314). William Henry Green (*A Grammar of the Hebrew Language*, New York, 1891, p. 313) also renders used to go up, "not only at the moment of time previously referred to but from that time onward".
interrupted at two points by divine fiats. Even apart from any consideration of Genesis 2:5, therefore, it cannot be held that the present *modus operandi* of divine providence *prevailed* on the third day, nor does the appeal to Genesis 2:5 prove such a thing. On the contrary, all that is stated of the third day (Gen. 1:9-15) shows that the works of that day were creative works and not those of ordinary providence. An appeal to Genesis 2:5 therefore does not support the position that the days are to be taken in a non-chronological manner.\(^{54}\)

3. The Schematic Nature of Genesis One

A further argument adduced to support the non-chrono-
logical view is found in the claim that Genesis one is schematic in nature. Thus, the author is said to divide the vegetable world into two groups, plants which give seed by means of the fruits and plants which give seed in a more direct way. In verses 24ff. something of the same nature is said to be found.\(^{55}\)

It may very well be that the author of Genesis one has arranged his material in a schematic manner. On this particular question we shall have more to say when presenting a positive interpretation of the chapter. At this point, however, one or two remarks will suffice. In the first place, from the fact that some of the material in Genesis one is given in schematic form, it does not necessarily follow that what is stated is to be dismissed as figurative or as not describing what actually occurred. Sometimes a schematic arrangement may serve the purpose of emphasis. Whether the language is figurative or symbolical, however, must be determined upon exegetical grounds. Secondly, a schematic disposition of the material in Genesis one does not prove, nor does it even

\(^{54}\) Even if Θᾶρ referred to evaporation (and as shown in note 31 this is not possible) it is difficult to understand how it could have provided rain-
fall sufficient for the entire earth. And if the reference is local, how can evaporation have arisen from a land in which there had been no rain or dew, and how on this interpretation can Genesis 2:5 be fitted into the third day of Genesis 1? These considerations support the view that the Θᾶρ designates subterranean waters, waters which may have entered the earth when the division between seas and dry land was made.

\(^{55}\) Quarterly, p. 223.
suggest, that the days are to be taken in a non-chronological sense. There appears to be a certain schematization, for example, in the genealogies of Matthew one, but it does not follow that the names of the genealogies are to be understood in a non-chronological sense, or that Matthew teaches that the generations from Abraham to David parallel, or were contemporary with, those from David to the Babylonian captivity and that these in turn are parallel to the generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ. Matthew, in other words, even though he has adopted a certain schematic arrangement, namely, fourteen generations to each group, is not presenting three different aspects of the same thing. He is not saying the same thing in three different ways. He has a schematic arrangement, but that does not mean that he has thrown chronology to the winds. Why, then, must we conclude that, merely because of a schematic arrangement, Moses has disposed of chronology?

4. Is the First-Hand Impression of Genesis One Correct?

In defense of the non-chronological view of the days it is asserted, and rightly, that Genesis one is not the product of a naive writer. At the same time, so it is argued, if we read Genesis "without prepossession or suspicion" we receive the impression that the author meant to teach a creation in six ordinary days and, more than that, to teach that the earth was created before the sun, moon and stars. This impression, apparently, is to be considered naive. "Is it good", asks Ridderbos, "to read Genesis one thus simply, 'avec des yeux ingenus'?

It is, of course, true that the first-hand impression that comes to us upon reading certain passages of the Bible may not be the correct one. Further reflection may lead to a re-evaluation of our first-hand impression and to the adoption of a different interpretation. But if we label a first-hand

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56 Cf. Matthew 1:1-17. Verse 17 gives a summary comment. It would certainly be unwarranted to conclude that, merely because of the schematic arrangement in Matthew, the names were to be interpreted figuratively or symbolically.
57 Conflict, p. 29.
58 Ibid., p. 29.
impression naive, we cannot do so merely upon the basis of our own independent and "autonomous" opinion as to what is naive. Only exegesis can tell us whether a certain impression is or is not naive. We ourselves, upon the basis of our subjective judgment, are not warranted in making such a pronouncement. If the first-hand impression that any Scripture makes upon us is naive, it is Scripture alone that can enable us so to judge, and not we ourselves apart from the Scripture.

If we understand it correctly, the argument now before us is that the prima facie impression which we receive from Genesis one is naive, and not to be accepted.\(^{59}\) This consideration raises the question why it is naive to believe that God created all things in six ordinary days or that the earth was created before the sun? This line of argumentation would prove too much, for it could be applied to other passages of Scripture as well. One who reads the Gospels, for example, is likely to receive the impression that they teach that Jesus rose from the dead. But can we in this day of science seriously be expected to believe that such an event really took place? At the same time, the Gospels can hardly be called the products of naive writers. Are we, therefore, able to understand the writers' meaning at first glance? Do the writers really intend to teach that Jesus rose from the dead or may they not be employing this particular manner of statement to express some great truth?

Only solid exegesis can lead to the true understanding of Scripture. If, in any instance, what appears to be the prima

\(^{59}\) At this point Ridderbos quotes the well-known statement of von Rad, a statement which he thinks "is of importance here" (Conflict, p. 29), namely, "It is doctrine which has been cautiously enriched in a process of very slow, century-long growth" ("es ist Lehre, die in langsamstem, jahrehundertelangem Wachstum sich behutsam angereichert hat" (von Rad, op. cit., p. 36). In the sense intended by von Rad, however, this statement cannot be accepted, for there is no evidence to support it. If Moses had before him written documents which he employed in compiling Genesis 1, these documents simply reflected an original revelation concerning the creation. When Moses as an inspired penman wrote, he was superintended by God's Spirit, so that he wrote precisely what God wished him to write. The form and content of Genesis 1 were the work of Moses writing under the inspiration of God's Spirit, and the words of Genesis 1 are God-breathed words (cf. II Tim. 3:16).
that he meant to say that God used a day for each of his great works? The same objection must be raised against this type of reasoning as was urged against the idea that some of the representations in Genesis one are naive. It is not the prerogative of the exegete on his own to determine what a sublime conception of God is.

It might also be remarked in this connection that if the idea of creation in six days really does detract from a sublime concept of God, the author of Genesis was certainly ill-advised in using it. If the author really possessed this sublime concept, why did he employ a scheme which would detract from that concept? Would it not have been better if he had simply told us the truth about creation in a straightforward manner, rather than used a scheme which presents a way of creation inconsistent with a sublime concept of God?

6. Parallelism of the Days

In favor of a non-chronological order of the days, it is also argued that there exists a certain parallelism between the first three and the last three days. Thus, it is held, the six days are divided into two groups of three each. The parallelism is thought to be seen in the light of the first day and the light-bearers of the fourth. Again, on the second day the firmament is created which divides the waters above and below it, and on the fifth day the waters are filled with living creatures. On the third day dry land appears, and on the sixth the inhabitants of earth are created.

60 Conflict, p. 31. "Are we really to take literally the representation that for every great work (or two works) of creation He used a day?"
61 Quarterly, p. 223.
Assuming that such parallelism actually exists, at best it proves that days four, five and six parallel days one, two and three. Even on this construction, however, a certain amount of chronology is retained. Days two-five must follow days one-four, and days three-six must follow days two-five. Hence, even here there would be chronological order, namely, days one-four, two-five, three-six.

As soon as one examines the text carefully, however, it becomes apparent that such a simple arrangement is not actually present. We may note that the light-bearers of the fourth day are placed in the firmament of heaven (1:14, 17). The firmament, however, was made on the second day (1:6, 7). Inasmuch as the fourth day is said to parallel the first, it follows that the work of the second day (making the firmament) must precede that of the first and fourth days (i.e., placing the light-bearers in the firmament). If the first and fourth days are really parallel in the sense that they present two aspects of the same thing, and if part of the work of the fourth day is the placing of the luminaries in the firmament, it follows that the firmament must be present to receive the luminaries. The firmament therefore, existed not only before the fourth day, but, inasmuch as it is a parallel to the fourth, before the first day also. This is an impossible conclusion, for verse three is connected with verse two grammatically, in that the three circumstantial clauses of verse two modify the main verb of verse three. At the same time by its use of the introductory words עַדָּוָה, verse two clearly introduces the detailed account of which a general statement is given in verse one. Verse two is the beginning of the section or unit, the first action of which is expressed by the main verb of verse three. To hold that days two-five precede days one-four is simply to abandon all grammatical considerations.

Furthermore, if day five is a parallel to day two, and day two is earlier than days one-four Genesis one is practically reduced to nonsense. On the fifth day the birds fly in the open firmament of heaven, and the fish fill the seas. This may cause no difficulty as far as the fish are concerned, but

light has not yet been created, and light is a prerequisite for the life of birds. A further difficulty also emerges. The fish are to swim in the seas (םבֹּל), but the seas were not formed until the third day. Day five, it must be noted, does not refer to the primeval ocean, but to the seas. From these brief considerations it is apparent that we cannot regard Genesis one as containing two groups of three days, each day of one group being a genuine parallel to the corresponding day of the other set.

It is now in place to ask in how far there actually does exist parallelism between two groups of three days each. That there is a certain amount of parallelism cannot be denied. The light of day one and the light-bearers of day four may be said to sustain a relationship to one another, but they are not identical. They are not two aspects of the same thing. The light of day one is called "day" (ז) and the heavenly bodies of day four are made to rule the day. That which rules (the heavenly bodies) and that which is ruled (the day) are not the same. In the very nature of the case they must be distinguished. The production of each is introduced by the short יי ("let there be"). At this point, however, the correspondence ceases.

Even though there may be a certain parallelism between the mention of light on day one and the light-bearers of day four, it is but a parallelism in that light and light-bearers bear a relationship one to another. What is stated about the light and the light-bearers, however, is quite different. The creation of light is the result of God's fiat. God himself then divides between the light and the darkness. On the fourth day God makes the light-bearers. Unlike the light of day one, they do not spring into existence at his creative word. It must also be noted that the functions of the light and those of the light-bearers are not parallel. In fact, no function whatever is given for the light of day one. On the other hand, the light-bearers of day four are brought into existence for the purpose of serving a world in which dry land and seas have been separated, a world on which plant and animal life

63 It is true that God calls the light "day", but no statement of function is made such as is found in connection with the sun and moon.
can exist. The division between light and darkness which God made on day one was at a time when the world was covered with water, and there was no firmament. The light-bearers, on the other hand, were placed in the firmament of heaven, a firmament that was brought into existence only on the second day. It is obvious, then, that the work of day one and that of day four are two distinct and different works. They do not parallel one another, other than that light characterizes one day and light-bearers the other.

Do the second and fifth days parallel one another? On day two there is a twofold fiat ("let there be a firmament ... and let it divide") and the fulfillment consists of two acts of God ("God made ... divided"), followed by a further act ("God called"). On the fifth day there is also a twofold fiat ("let the waters bring forth ... and the fowl let it fly") and then comes a fulfillment consisting of a threefold creative act of God ("God created ... great whales. .. every living thing ... every winged fowl") and this is followed by two additional acts of God ("God saw ... God blessed"). As far as form is concerned, the parallelism is by no means exact.

Nor is there exact parallelism in content. The swarming waters and their inhabitants which were created in the fifth day are not to be identified with the primeval waters of day two. Rather, it is expressly stated that the fish are to fill the waters in the seas (verse 22), and the seas were brought into existence on the third day. For that matter, if a mere parallel with water is sought, we may note that "the waters" and the "abyss" are mentioned in verse two also.

The birds are created that they may fly above the earth upon the faces of the expanse of heaven (verse 20). Is this a parallel to the work of day two? Actually the only parallel consists in the mention of the word "firmament". Now, it is true that the birds fly in the firmament, but they also belong

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64 Although it is not explicitly stated in verse 2 that the earth was covered with water, this seems to be implied, and the fiat of verse 9 shows that such was the case. Cf. "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2", Westminster Theological Journal, Vol. XXIII, No. 2 (May 1961), p. 171.

65 Ridderbos says that this must not be given much weight (Conflict, p. 35). It is sufficiently weighty, however, to show that the alleged parallelism between days two and five is an illusion.
to the earth. They are created first of all to fly above the earth (גָּן) and are commanded to multiply in the earth (גֶּן). The sphere in which the birds are to live is explicitly said to be the earth, not the firmament; and the earth, capable of sustaining bird life, did not appear until the third day. In the light of these emphases it is difficult to understand how a parallel between days two and five is present.

Let us briefly examine the relationship between the third and sixth days. There are three fiats on the third day (waters ... dry land ... earth). The first two are followed by a threefold act of God ("God called ... called he ... God saw") and the third fiat is followed by a twofold act ("the earth brought forth ... God saw"). On the sixth day, following the fiat and fulfillment with respect to the living creatures, a unique method of statement is introduced, which has no parallel in the description of the third day. Indeed, it is difficult to discover any parallel of thought with the third day. At best it may be said that the dry land of day three is the sphere in which man and the animals live. This, however, is a parallelism which applies only to a part of the third day.

A word must be said about the view that days one, two and three present the realm and days four, five and six the ruler in that realm, and that therefore there are two parallel trios of days. With respect to days one and three we may remark that light is not the sphere in which the light-bearers rule. The sphere of the primitive light, however, is the day. "God called the light day." On day four the sphere in which the light-bearers rule is the day and night to give light upon the earth. It is true that they are placed in the expanse of heaven, but this is in order that they may give light upon the earth. The sphere of the sea creatures of day five is not the firmament of day two but the seas (verse 22) of the earth, and the sphere in which the birds rule is also the earth (verse 22).

66 This view was set forth by V. Zapletal: Der Schopfungsbericht, Freiburg, 1902. Zapletal rejects what he calls the scholastic distinction of "opus distinctionis et opus ornatus", a distinction which, he claims, is influenced by the Vulgate translation of 2:1 "et omnis ornatus eorum". Instead, he would emphasize the Hebrew נָרָץ and speak of "die Schopfung der Heere (sabha)" and "die Schopfung der Regionen, der Kampfplatze dieser Heere," i.e., "productio regionum et exercituum" (p. 72).
The same is true of the land animals and man; the spheres in which they rule is not merely the dry land of day three, but the entire earth, including the fish of the sea, which God has prepared for them. The matter may be set forth in tabular form as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Ruler</th>
<th>Realm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>light-bearers</td>
<td>the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>five</td>
<td>sea creatures</td>
<td>seas of earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>six</td>
<td>winged fowl</td>
<td>earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>land animals</td>
<td>earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>man</td>
<td>earth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the view that days one, two and three present the realm and days four, five and six the ruler in that realm, is contrary to the explicit statements of Genesis.

7. The Historiography of Genesis One

The historiography of the Bible, it is said, is not quite the same as modern historiography.\(^{67}\) Genesis one is thought to contain a peculiar sort of history, for man is not present to play a role alongside of God. Often, it is argued, the biblical writers group their facts together in an artificial manner and deviate from a chronological order, without any indication of the fact being given. Indeed, without warning, the biblical writer may deviate from a chronological order and arrange his material artificially.

Ridderbos has aptly called attention, for example, to Genesis two as a passage in which a certain schematic arrangement is present and he rightly points out that Genesis two is an

\(^{67}\) *Quarterly*, p. 225; *Conflict*, p. 30. Visee *(op. cit.*, p. 636) does not wish to apply the word "history" to Genesis 1, inasmuch as he thinks it is not a suitable word to use ("niet juist"). Nevertheless, his comments are true to Scripture. He regards Genesis 1 as a factual account of what actually took place, but withholds from it the term "history" because it is not an eyewitness account or the fruit of historical investigation. There can be no serious objection to this position, although we prefer to apply the term history to all that has happened, even though our knowledge thereof should come to us through special divine revelation (e. g., Genesis 1) instead of by historical investigation.

We do not see what is gained, however, by labelling Genesis 1, *Verbondsgeschiedenis* (Popma, *op. cit.*, p. 622). Genesis 1 is the divine revelation of the creation. That point must be insisted upon.
introduction to the account of the fall of man.\textsuperscript{68} Genesis two may well serve as an example of a passage of Scripture in which chronological considerations are not paramount. This will be apparent if we simply list certain matters mentioned in the chapter.

1. God formed man (verse 7).
2. God planted a garden (verse 8a).
3. God placed the man in the garden (verse 8b).
4. God caused the trees to grow (verse 9a).
5. God placed the man in the garden (verse 15a).

It is obvious that a chronological order is not intended here. How many times did God place man in the garden? What did God do with man before he placed him in the garden? How many times did God plant the garden, or did God first plant a garden and then later plant the trees? Clearly enough Moses here has some purpose other than that of chronology in mind.

In chapter two events are narrated from the standpoint of emphasis, in preparation for the account of the fall.\textsuperscript{69} Looked at from this viewpoint, the chapter is remarkably rich in meaning. First of all we may note that it is not a duplicate or second account of creation. Hence, we should not make the mistake of trying to force its "order of events" into harmony with the order of events given in chapter one. The section begins by giving us a barren earth, for there had been no rain and there was no man to till the ground. God, however, did not desire man to dwell in a barren earth but in a garden, for man was to be God's guest on this earth. Hence, God will prepare a dwelling place for him. First the ground is watered and then man is created. For man the garden is made, God's garden, and man is placed therein. The garden, however, is a place of exquisite beauty, and trees are made to grow therein. Thus we are prepared for the prohibition not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Further information about the location of the garden and its well-watered character is then given, that we may learn that its trees will truly thrive. There, in a place of great charm, man is placed as God's servant to work the

\textsuperscript{68} Op. Cit., pp. 26 f.
\textsuperscript{69} Cf. W. H. Green: \textit{The Unity of the Book of Genesis}, New York, 1895, pp. 7-36, for an excellent discussion of the nature of Genesis 2.
garden. The garden is not Adam's but God's, and God alone may prescribe the manner in which Adam is to live therein. Adam is forbidden to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

When this important matter is disposed of, Moses then introduces a question that has to do with man's relation to his environment. His relation to God, however, must first be made clear (verses 16, 17) and then that to his environment. He is not to live alone, but is to have the animals as his helpers. Yet they are not sufficient to correspond to him; only the woman can be such a help. Her creation is then related, and Adam recognizes her who was to show herself a hindrance as a help that is essentially one with himself. One final point must be mentioned to prepare for the account of the fall. Adam and Eve were naked, yet not ashamed. They were good, and no evil was found in them.

What Moses does in Genesis two is truly remarkable. He emphasizes just those points which need to be stressed, in order that the reader may be properly prepared to understand the account of the fall. Are we, however, warranted in assuming that, inasmuch as the material in Genesis two is arranged in a non-chronological manner, the same is likely to be true of Genesis one? It is true that in Genesis one man is not present until the sixth day, but is this sufficient warrant for claiming that the days are to be taken in a non-chronological manner?

In the very nature of the case Genesis one is *sui generis*. Its content could have been known only by special communication from God. Obviously, it is not a history of mankind, but it is the divine revelation of the creation of heaven and earth and of man, and it is to be interpreted only upon the basis of serious exegesis. The fact that Genesis two discusses its subject in a partly non-chronological manner really has

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70 "This phenomenon (i. e., that in prophetic and apocalyptic writings "events are telescoped, grouped, and arranged in a given manner") should make us hospitable toward the idea that in Genesis 1, which treats not the distant future but the unimaginable distant past, we should encounter the same sort of thing" (Conflict, p. 39). But Genesis 1 is *sui generis*; it is to be interpreted only on its own merits, and only by means of a serious attempt to ascertain the meaning of the author.
little bearing upon how Genesis one is to be interpreted. Genesis one must be interpreted upon its own merit.

8. Analogy of Other Passages
This same consideration must be emphasized in answer to the appeal made to other passages of Scripture. Thus, it is pointed out that certain visions of John, although they are heptadic in structure, nevertheless, do not exhibit a strictly chronological sequence. Whether they exhibit a chronological sequence or not may sometimes be difficult to determine, but it is really an irrelevant consideration, for even if all the events in Revelation were narrated without regard for chronological considerations, that fact in itself would not prove that the first chapter of Genesis was to be so interpreted. Although the book of Revelation is identified as containing words of prophecy, it nevertheless is an apocalypse in the sense that Daniel also is an apocalypse. Together with the book of Daniel it forms a unique literary genre which is not matched or equalled by the non-canonical apocalypses. It is not always to be interpreted in the same manner as writing which is truly historical. If, therefore, there are passages in Revelation which are to be interpreted in a non-chronological manner, this in itself is really an irrelevant consideration. It has nothing to do with the manner in which the historical writing of Genesis one is to be interpreted. If Revelation is to be a guide for the interpretation of Genesis one, then it must be shown that Genesis one is of the same literary genre as Revelation. This, we believe, cannot be successfully done.

In this connection it may be remarked that appeal to other passages of Scripture in which a non-chronological order of statement is found is really beside the point. No one denies that there are such passages. What must be denied is the idea that the presence of such passages somehow supports the view that Genesis one is to be interpreted non-chronologically.\textsuperscript{71}

(to be concluded)

\textsuperscript{71} The following passages are generally adduced in this connection, Gen. 2; II Kg. 23:4-10; Ps. 78:44 ff.; Matt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:13, 16-30; Matt. 13:53-58. Cf. Conflict, pp. 37f.

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IV. The Fourth Commandment and the Scheme
Six Plus One

The fourth commandment actually refutes the non-chronological interpretation of Genesis one. It is to the credit of Professor Ridderbos that he recognizes the difficulty and endeavors to provide an explanation. He candidly states that we do not know what led the Israelite to work six days and to rest a seventh, other than the influence of God's providence. Hence, the author of Genesis one could present his material in such a way as to give the impression that God worked six days and rested one day.

The "rest" of God, argues Ridderbos correctly, is to be regarded as creation's climax, and this rest was expressed by mentioning the seventh day. Man, according to the fourth commandment, is to work as God worked. He is not, however, to be a slave to his work, but, as God rested, so man at the proper time is to lay aside his work for rest. His work, like that of God, is to have the glory of God as its goal. The numbers of Genesis one, therefore, it is reasoned, have symbolic values.

72 Quarterly, p. 227.
73 Conflict, p. 41. H. J. Nieboer (Lucerna, p. 645), in speaking of the problem, remarks, "het ligt echter voor de hand aan te nemen, dat voor ons als westerse mensen--met lineaal, weegschaal en chronometer--zich hier een probleem voordoet, dat voor de gelovige Israeliet, wiens cultus vol was van symbolische transposities, helemaal niet bestond". A position that requires this type of defense must be weak indeed. Ezekiel had a measuring rod (Ezekiel 40:3); Amos knew what a plumbline was (Amos 7:7); the ark was constructed according to certain measurements, so also were the tabernacle and temple. And as for the matter of weights we may note Deuteronomy 25:13-16. Nor should we forget Ahaz' sundial (Isaiah 38:8).

It should be noted that the seventh day is to be interpreted as similar
In accordance with his decree—for Ridderbos rightly desires to retain the idea that the Sabbath ordinance is rooted in creation—God designated the seventh day as a day of rest, and so the number seven became a sacred number, "the number of the completed cycle", and this pattern is presupposed in the ten commandments.

There are, however, serious difficulties in any attempt to square a non-chronological scheme of the days of Genesis with the fourth commandment. One must agree, whatever position he is defending, that, irrespective of their length, the periods mentioned in Genesis one may legitimately be designated by the Hebrew word ₪ (day). The fundamental question is whether or not Genesis one presents a succession of six days followed by a seventh. According to Exodus 20 such is the case. "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work", is the divine command, and the reason given for obedience thereto is rooted in God's creative work, "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth". Man, therefore, according to the Ten Commandments, is to work for six consecutive days, inasmuch as God worked for six consecutive days.

The whole structure of the week is rooted and grounded in the fact that God worked for six consecutive days and rested a seventh. For this reason we are commanded to remember ₪ (the Sabbath day. Man is to "remember" the Sabbath day, for God has instituted it. There would be no point in the command, "Remember the Sabbath day", if God had not instituted the day. The human week derives validity and significance from the creative week. Indeed, the very Hebrew word for week ₪ means "that which is divided into seven", "a besevened thing". The fourth commandment in nature to the preceding six days. There is no Scriptural warrant whatever (certainly not Hebrews 4:3-5) for the idea that this seventh day is eternal. Visee (op. cit., p. 640) is on good ground when he writes "En al evenmin laat zich als tegenargument (i. e., against the position that the days were solar days) aanvoeren, dat de zevende dag, nog zou voortduren. De Zevende dag van Genesis 2:2 en 3 is kennelijk een dag in de bekende zin geweest, de dag, die God de HEERE als de dag, waarop Hij zelf gerust heeft (perfectum), voor zijn scheeps gezegend heeft."

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74 ₪ -- lit., a heptad. The form appears to be a Qal passive participle, at least in passages such as Gen. 29:27, 28; Lev. 12:5; Jer. 5:24. On the
constitutes a decisive argument against any non-chronological scheme of the six days of Genesis one. And a non-chronological scheme destroys the reason for observance of a six-day week followed by a seventh day of rest.

The scheme of six days followed by a seventh is also deeply embedded in the literature of the ancient near east. In Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic, for example, we read (lines 127-130),

Six days and six (nights)
Did the wind blow, the rain, the tempest and the flood overwhelmed the land.

When the seventh day came, the tempest, the flood
Which had battling like an army, subsided in its onslaught. 75

The reference is to the six days of the downpour of the flood, days which are followed by a seventh. The meaning of course is that for a space of six days the winds blew and the rain fell. Certainly there would be no warrant for interpreting the phrase "six days" otherwise. Yet, inasmuch as it is used in precisely the same manner, if in the Gilgamesh epic the phrase "six days" means six consecutive days, why does it not have the same meaning in Exodus 20?

Again, in Tablet XI (lines 142-146) we read,

Mount Nisir held fast the ship and did not allow it to move,
One day, a second day did the Mount Nisir hold the ship firm.
A third day, a fourth day did the Mount Nisir hold the ship firm.

Other hand, in certain instances the word is written with a naturally long a, e.g., Dan. 9:24; Num. 28:26; Dan. 10:2, 3; Ex. 34:22.

75 The text is found in R. Campbell Thompson: The Epic of Gilgamesh, Oxford, 1930. The comment of Bohl (Het Gilgamesj-Epos Nationaal Heldendicht van Babylonie, 1952, Amsterdam, p. 81) is interesting. "Na een week (aanmerkelijk eerder dan volgens het bijbelse verhaal) houdt de vloed op." How else can the words of the text be understood? "Na een week" is the natural understanding that one would receive from the cuneiform text.
When the seventh day came,  
I sent forth a dove and dismissed her.\textsuperscript{76}

Here the idea of succession is made very clear. The pattern is six successive days followed by a seventh. A similar pattern is given in the description of the loaves which the wife of Utnapishtim bakes for him. 

His first loaf of bread was completely dried, 
the second --- the third --- moist; the fourth white --- the fifth moldy; the sixth just baked --- the seventh - - - the man awoke (tablet XI, lines 215-218).\textsuperscript{77}

Here six distinct loaves are mentioned, and at the mention of the seventh, after the six have been described, Utnapishtim touches the man, and he awakes. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the order of the description of the loaves chronology is present.

In the Babylonian Creation Account (Enuma Elish) we read in the fifth tablet (lines 16, 17),

Thou shalt shine with horns to make known six days;  
On the seventh day with (hal)f a tiara \textsuperscript{78}

Here the shining forth is to occupy the space of six days, and the seventh day which follows is climactic.

The same scheme of six days followed by a seventh is also found in the literature of Ugarit.\textsuperscript{79} The following examples will suffice:

Go a day, and a second, a third, a fourth day, 
a fifth, a sixth day, with the sun,  
On the seventh day, then thou shalt arrive at Udm.  
(Keret I iii, lines 2-4).

\textsuperscript{76} Note the emphasis that is placed on the seventh day. "VII-a uma (ma) i-na ka-sa-a-di" (tablet XI, line 145). The same phrase i-na ka-sa-a-di is also used in line 129.

\textsuperscript{77} Here again the seventh day is climactic.

\textsuperscript{78} The text is given in L. King: \textit{The Seven Tablets of Creation}, 2 vols., 1902. \textit{Cf}. also A. Heidel: \textit{The Babylonian Genesis}, Chicago, 1951, which gives an excellent translation and commentary.

- - - - - remain quiet a day, and a second,
a third, a fourth day, a fifth,
a sixth day, thine arrow do not send
to the town, the stones of thy hand
in succession cast. And behold, the sun
On the seventh day, etc.

(Keret I iii, lines 10-15).

Behold! a day and a second he fed
the Kathirat, and gave drink to the shining daughters
of the moon; a third, a fourth day, - - -
- - - - a fifth
a sixth day - - - -
Behold! on the seventh day - - - .

(Aqhat II ii, lines 32-39).

Behold! - - - - day, and a second, did devour
the fire - - - in the houses, the flames
in the palace, a third, a fourth day,
did the fire devour in the houses
a fifth, a sixth day did devour
fire in the houses, flames
in the midst of the palaces. Behold!
on the seventh day there was extinguished the fire.

(Baal II vi, lines 24-32).

From the evidence just adduced it is clear that in the
ancient near eastern world there was recognized a scheme of
six successive days or items followed by a climactic seventh.
In its best known form this scheme appears in the ordinary
week. That man thus began to distinguish the days did not
derive from chance. It was rooted in the very creation. Men
are to remember the Sabbath day for that was the day on
which God rested from his labors. In adopting a six-day week
climaxed by a seventh day of rest, mankind was obedient to
its Creator, who also had worked for six days and rested on
the seventh.
V. The Nature and Structure of Genesis One

Genesis one is a document *sui generis*; its like or equal is not to be found anywhere in the literature of antiquity.\(^8^0\) And the reason for this is obvious. Genesis one is a divine revelation to man concerning the creation of heaven and earth. It does not contain the cosmology of the Hebrews or of Moses. Whatever that cosmology may have been, we do not know. Had they not been the recipients of special revelation their cosmology probably would have been somewhat similar to that of the Babylonians. There is no reason to believe that their ideas as to the origin of the heavens and earth would have been more "advanced" than those of their neighbors. Israel, however, was favored of God in that he gave to her a revelation concerning the creation of heaven and earth,\(^8^1\) and Genesis one is that revelation.

Genesis one is written in exalted, semi-poetical language; nevertheless, it is not poetry. For one thing the characteristics

\(^8^0\) For this reason we cannot properly speak of the literary genre of Genesis one. It is not a cosmogony, as though it were simply one among many. In the nature of the case a true cosmogony must be a divine revelation. The so-called "cosmogonies" of the various peoples of antiquity are in reality deformations of the originally revealed truth of creation. There is only one genuine cosmogony, namely, Genesis one, and this account alone gives reliable information as to the origin of the earth. Nor is Genesis one an epic of creation, for an epic is actually a narrative poem that centers about the exploits of some hero. Whether in writing Genesis one Moses by divine inspiration was led to express the truth in a literary form, which by its use of recurring phrases and small compact units, was similar to literary forms of Canaan is difficult to determine. Gray, for example (*The Legacy of Canaan*, Leiden, 1957, p. 213), remarks that there are no exact replicas of the Canaanite literary types in the Old Testament although he does think that some of the main features and much of the imagery familiar in the Canaanite myth are found in the myth of the conflict of Cosmos and Chaos which, according to Gray, was adopted by the Hebrews. With this latter thought we cannot agree, for we do not believe that there is evidence extant to support the view that the Hebrews ever adopted any myth of the conflict of Cosmos and Chaos. The basic reason why Moses used the device of six days was that creation occurred in six days.

\(^8^1\) This conclusion follows inasmuch as Genesis one is a part of the holy Scriptures. *In Thy Word Is Truth* (Grand Rapids, 1957) I have set forth the reasons why I believe the Bible to be the Word of God.
of Hebrew poetry are lacking, and in particular there is an absence of parallelism. It is true that there is a division into paragraphs, but to label these strophes does not render the account poetic. The Bible does contain poetic statements of creation, namely, Job 38:8-11 and Psalm 104:5-9. Ridderbos aptly points out that if one will read Genesis 1:6-8; Job 38:8-11 and Psalm 104:5-9 in succession he will feel the difference between the Genesis account and the poetic accounts. The latter two passages are poetic for they contain parallelism, and it is this feature which is lacking in the first chapter of the Bible.

Genesis one is the prelude to a severely historical book, a book so strongly historical that it may be labeled genealogical. Indeed, the first chapter stands in an intimate relationship with what follows. By its usage of the phrase הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה Hymn of exultation which is intended to identify הניהם of chapter one. Genesis 2:4a connects the prelude (Gen. 1:1-2:3) with the genealogical section of the book. It is an intimate relationship, for chapters two and three clearly presuppose the contents of chapter one. This is seen among other things in the usage of the phrase רֹאִים which is intended to identify הניהם, with the הניהם of chapter one. Furthermore, chapter two assumes the creation of the earth, the heaven and the sea, the account of which is given in chapter one.

The chapter is thus seen to constitute an integral part of the entire book and is to be regarded as sober history. By this we mean that it recounts what actually transpired. It is reliable and trustworthy, for it is the special revelation of God. If this involves conflicts with what scientists assert, we cannot escape difficulties by denying the historical character of

82 Conflict, p. 36. The following quotation from Visee (op. cit., p. 636) makes an interesting point. "In Genesis 2 komt wel een dichterlijk gedeelte voor. Reeds B. Wielenga heeft er op gewezen dat we in Adams bruidsgomslied to doen hebben met het eerste lied. Maar juist dit om z'n poetische vorm in deze prozaïsche omgeving terstond opvallende lied accentueert destemeer het niet-poetisch karakter der eerste hoofdstukken." The reference is to Wielenga's book, De Bijbel als boek van schoonheid, Kampen, 1925, pp. 237, 238, a work which I have not seen.

83 For examples of double names of deity in the ancient near east see the informative article of K. A. Kitchen: "Egypt and the Bible: Some Recent Advances", in Faith and Thought, Vol. 91, Nos. 2 and 3 (Winter 1959, Summer 1960), pp. 189, 190.
Genesis. We cannot agree, for example, with Vawter, when he writes, "It is therefore apparent that we should not be seeking a concord between the poetry of Genesis and the scientifically established data on the development of the universe." To dismiss Genesis one as poetry, and it is Genesis one of which Vawter is speaking, is to refuse to face the facts.

At the same time, although Genesis one is an historical account, it is clear, as has often been pointed out, that Moses does employ a certain framework for the presentation of his material. This may be described by the terms fiat and fulfillment, and the scheme may be represented as follows:

1. The divine speech
2. The fiat
3. The fulfillment
4. The judgment
5. Conclusion

A careful study of Genesis one, however, will show that this arrangement is not consistently carried through for each of the days. Indeed, even the mere fiat-fulfillment is not con-

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84 A Pathway Through Genesis, New York, 1956, p. 48. Nor is it consistent to regard the entire chapter as a figurative scheme and yet hold that it teaches that God is the creator of all. For if we interpret the greater part of the chapter as not corresponding to what actually happened (and how can the non-chronological view escape this?) by what warrant may we say that Genesis 1:1 corresponds to what did happen? We have not then derived the doctrine of creation from this chapter by exegesis, but have simply assumed it in an a priori fashion. For the so-called "framework" hypothesis demands inconsistency of its adherents. It tells them that they themselves may choose what in Genesis one corresponds to reality. Surely such an hypothesis cannot be regarded as exegetically well grounded. Visee (op. cit., p. 639) is to the point when he writes, "En niets geeft ons het recht allerlei zakelijke en feitelijke gegevens uit Genesis 1 te elimineren en het geheel te verschralen tot de hoofdsom, 'dat alles van God is.' "

85 Oswald T. Allis: "Old Testament Emphases and Modern Thought", in Princeton Theological Review, Vol. XXIII (July 1925), p. 443. Kramer points out (op. cit., p. 9) that the fiats of Genesis one have a parallel in the words of Enki, "Let him bring up the water, etc." He also calls attention to the repetitions in lines 42-52 (cf. Gen. 1:11) and lines 53-64 (Gen. 1:12) and to the phrase "and it was indeed so" (hur he-na-nam-ma) as a correspondence to נק"הוי.
sistantly maintained. Nor can we agree with Deimel that the writer has consistently employed seven different literary elements (the sacred number). These are said to be (1) God said; (2) the fiat; (3) the fulfillment; (4) description of the particular act of creation; (5) God's naming or blessing; (6) the divine satisfaction and (7) the conclusion. These seven literary elements are thought to interlock in the following fashion.

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But is this arrangement actually found in Genesis? In the opinion of the writer of this article these literary elements are more accurately enumerated as follows:

I 7 II 8 III 7, 6 IV 9 V 7 VI 5, 10

Thus, on the second day there is actually a double fiat, "let there be an expanse ... and let it be dividing". In response to this there is also a double fulfillment, "and God made ... and he divided". On the fifth day, to which the literary elements of the second day are supposed to correspond we find also a double fiat, "let the waters swarm ... let the birds fly". Corresponding to this, however, although three objects of his creative activity are mentioned, there is but one fulfillment, "and God created". Here, therefore, there is no perfect correspondence of form with the description of the second day.

Again, it is very questionable whether a true correspondence of form can be shown to exist between the third and the sixth days. With respect to the first work of the third day there are actually seven elements, for there is a double fiat, "let

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"In dem obigen Schema entsprechen sich das 1. and 8. Werk in bezug auf die Zahl der Formeln, 2. and 5. in bezug auf Zahl und Reihenfolge der Formeln, 2. and 6., 3. and 7. in bezug auf die Zahl der Formeln" (p. 81).
the waters be gathered ... and let the dry land be seen".
At this point, however, no fulfillment of these fiats is mentioned, but merely the statement, "and it was so". With respect to the first work of the sixth day, however, there are but five literary elements. There is but one fiat, "let the earth send forth", and this is followed by the statement, "and it was so". Then comes the actual fulfillment in the words, "And God made, etc.". This is quite different from the arrangement of the first work of the third day.

As to the second work of the third day there are six elements; one fiat ("let the earth send forth grass" etc.) followed by the words, "and it was so", and then the fulfillment, "And the earth sent forth grass" etc. Very different in arrangement, however, is the second work of the sixth day. True enough, there are here six elements, but they include a double fiat, followed by the fulfillment, "and God created", and a command of God. This is entirely different in arrangement from the second work of the third day. Furthermore, there is added to the second work of the sixth day an additional "and God said", and this is followed by an "and it was so", and the summary statement, "and God saw everything that he had made" etc., and then the conclusion in which the evening and morning are mentioned.

From this brief analysis, it is evident that we cannot find the exact correspondences which Deimel believes exist in the first chapter of Genesis. It is perhaps accurate to say that the account of creation is told in terms of fiat and fulfillment, although not even this arrangement is carried through consistently. Hence, it would seem that the primary interest of the writer was not a schematic classification or arrangement of material. His primary concern was to relate how God created the heaven and the earth. There is enough in the way of repetitive statement and schematic arrangement to arrest the attention, and when it has arrested the attention, it has fulfilled its function. The arrangement of the material serves the purpose merely of impressing upon the reader's mind the significance of the content.
VI. Survey of Genesis One: The First Day

What follows is merely a sketch of the contents of Genesis one, which seeks to point out the progress and development that characterize the chapter. It in no sense pretends to be a full scale commentary. The presence of this chronological succession of events constitutes one of the strongest arguments against any non-chronological view of the days.

Although the beginning of the first day is not mentioned in Genesis one, it would seem from Exodus 20:11 that it began with the absolute creation, the very beginning. After the statement of creation in verse one, the first divine act mentioned is the command, "let there be light". The conditions existing at the time when this command was uttered were those set forth in the second verse of the chapter. Against the dark background described in verse two the light shone forth. As a result of God's speaking, the light sprang into existence. This light is not an emanation from God, nor is it an attribute, but is the result of God's creative Word.

It must be noted that Genesis one teaches the creation of light before the sun, nor is this to be regarded as an accident. Even if the chapter be considered a mere human composition, we may be sure that its author knew well enough that the light of the present-day world comes from the sun. This representation was intentional. And it is well to note that Enuma Elish has the same order. Here also light comes before the sun. Not until the fifth tablet do we meet with a statement of the making of the heavenly bodies. In this respect therefore, namely, relating the production of the heavenly bodies after the existence of light, the Enuma Elish is in agreement with Genesis. When Apsu wishes to revolt, light is already present, for he says: "Their way has become grievous to me. By day I cannot rest, by night I cannot sleep" (1:37, 38). Heidel also points out that there was a radiance or dazzling aureole about Apsu (1:68), "He carried off his splendor and put it on himself". And Marduk him-

87 Cf. Heidel; op. cit., p. 101. The light, according to Genesis, does not spring from water, nor is it the result of divine action upon the inert mass of tehom (Albright: "Contributions to Biblical Archaeology And Philology", Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 43, p. 368). According to Genesis, light is the result of the creative Word alone. Nor can we say that in
self was a solar deity, "Son of the sun-god, the sun god of the gods" (1:102). In Enuma Elish light is really an attribute of the gods; in Genesis it is the creation of God. That such an order should be present in Enuma Elish is what might be expected, for this document represents the garbled version of the truth that finally trickled down to the Babylonians.

Is Genesis, however, correct in its teaching that light was created before the sun? Leupold well remarks, "But it ill behooves man to speak an apodictic word at this point and to claim that light apart from the sun is unthinkable. Why should it be? If scientists now often regard light as merely enveloping the sun but not as an intrinsic part of it, why could it not have existed by itself without being localized in any heavenly body?" In an area so filled with mystery and about which we know so little, who can dare to assert that Moses is in error in declaring that light was created before the sun? Can one prove that the presence of light demands a light-bearer? What about the lightning flash? May there not have been rays of original light? We do not know; what can be said with assurance is that at this point Genesis makes no statement that scientists can disprove.

Perhaps one reason why Genesis mentions light before the sun is to disabuse our minds of the idea that light is dependent upon the sun and to cause us to turn our eyes to God as its creator. "Therefore the Lord", says Calvin, "by the very order of the creation, bears witness that he holds in his hand the light, which he is able to impart to us without the sun and moon". There is also a second reason for this order of statement. The light is necessary for all that follows, and Moses places emphasis upon, the light, mentioning it as the specific object of God's approval. Elsewhere we have only throwing off the mythical point of view and adopting a cosmogony in which water was the primal element, Thales, founder of the Ionian school of philosophy, showed that he was influenced by a common milieu which also had influenced the writer of Genesis one.


the general phrase without a specific object, "and God saw that it was good". Only in verse thirty-one is an object again introduced after the verb "saw." Thus:

verse 4 \( \text{נָרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתֶּנְקָדְרָו כִּי זָוָּב } \)

verse 31 \( \text{נָרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶתֶּנְקָדְרָו כִּי לְאִשָּׁר אֵשֶׁר קֹדֶשׁ אֶלֶּה תֹּכַה יֵזָרָּ בָּעִדָּה } \)

A contrast is thus shown to be present. The first work is pronounced good, and the completed creation likewise. Nor is it accidental that the light is seen to be good. The light is the necessary condition for the existence of all the works that follow in so far as these have respect to the earth. For life on earth light is necessary, and hence the creation of light is first mentioned.\(^{90}\)

The division between light and darkness as well as their naming is the work of God. When the light was removed by the appearance of darkness, it was evening, and the coming of light brought morning, the completion of a day. The days therefore, are to be reckoned from morning to morning,\(^{91}\) and the commencement of the first day, we believe, was at the very beginning.\(^{92}\)

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\(^{90}\) "Endlich ist -list, besonders vor der Trennung von \( \text{יָם מָיֵי מָיֵי} \) die allgemeinste, den Umfang des gesamten Chaos erfüllende Schöpfung, die darum geziemend am Anfang des Schöpfungswerks steht" (Procksch; \textit{op. cit.}, p. 427). "das Licht ist Grundbeding. aller Ordn. u. alles Lebens" (Strack; \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1). "ohne Licht kein Leben und keine Ordnung" (Gunkel: \textit{op. cit.}, p. 103).

\(^{91}\) "Mit der Reihenfolge Abend-Morgen wird ganz klar gesagt, Bass der Tag mit dem Morgen beginnt" (Rabast: \textit{op. cit.}, p. 48). When, however, Rabast goes on to say, "Es heisst ja nicht, es war Abend, sondern es wurde Abend. Der Abend ist also der Abschluss des Tages" (op. cit., p. 48), he apparently limits day to the period of light in distinction from the darkness. But the six days of creation are not thus limited by the text. Procksch is quite dogmatic (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 427), "Die Anschauung des ersten Tages ist also vom irdischen, 24 stündigen Tag eines Aquinoktiums hergenommen, wegen v. 11-13 wohl des Frühlingsaquinoktiums, am Morgen beginnend, am Morgen schliessend".

\(^{92}\) Cf. Keil (\textit{op. cit.}, p. 51), "The first evening was not the gloom, which possibly preceded the full burst of light as it came forth from the primary darkness, and intervened between the darkness and full, broad daylight. It was not till after the light had been created, and the separation of the light from the darkness had taken place, that evening came, and after the evening the morning; and this coming of evening (lit., the obscure) and morning (the breaking) formed one, or the first, day. It follows from this
The Second Day

In the work of day one the emphasis falls upon the light, but in day two the earth is the center of attention. Indeed, the purpose of the second day's work is to separate the earth from all that is beyond it. This is done by means of the firmament which divides the waters above it, i.e., beyond it, from those which are beneath it, i.e., those which adhere to the earth.

The order of Genesis, namely, the creation of the firmament after the light, is also paralleled in Enuma Elish. When Ti'amat is slain, Marduk split her open, and half of her he used to form the sky or firmament. Then he fixed the crossbar and posted guards that the waters in that part of her body which was used to form the sky should not escape. Crass as is this mythology it nevertheless reflects, albeit in a greatly mutilated form, the originally revealed truth that the firmament was made after the light and before the appearance of dry land.

From this point on, the chapter concerns itself with the days of creation are not reckoned from evening to evening, but from morning to morning."

93 "Eigentlich beginnt die Erschaffung der Welt erst mit der Feste (Vers 6); die Erschaffung des Lichts ist vielmehr Vorbedingung des Erschaffens der Welt" (Claus Westermann: Der Schopfungsbericht vom Anfang der Bibel, Stuttgart, 1960, p. 17). This emphasis seems to be more accurate than that of Gunkel (op. cit., p. 104) who labels the work of the second day "Schopfung des Himmels".

94 יְפֵיקָר, i.e., that which is hammered, beaten out. Cf. Isa. 42:5; Ps. 136:6 and the Phoenician y-1)-in "plating" (Cooke: North Semitic Inscriptions, Oxford, 1903, p. 75). Note also the LXX στερεός and Vulgate firmamentum, which are satisfactory renderings. I am unable to accept the opinion that the waters above the expanse refer to the clouds, for this position does not do justice to the language of the text which states that these waters are above the expanse.

95 The account of the making of the "firmament" is found on Tablet IV, lines 137-139, which may be rendered,

He split her open like an oyster? (nu-nu mas-di-e)
into two parts,
Half of her he set up, and the sky (sa-ma-ma)
he made as a covering,
He made fast the par-ku (crossbar? bolt?)
and watchmen he stationed.
waters under the expanse. In the nature of the case the crea-
tion of the firmament must have preceded the division be-
tween land and earthbound waters; it could not possibly have
followed it. The work of day two, therefore, has to be chrono-
logically previous to that of day three.

The Third Day

Light has been created in order that the dry land may be
adorned with verdure, and the firmament has been made that
the waters underneath it may be gathered into one place.
A twofold fiat introduces the work. First, the water under
heaven is to be gathered into one place, and secondly, the
dry land is to appear, and the fulfillment is simply stated by
the words "and it was so". The magnitude of the work to
be accomplished baffles the imagination and yet, in the simple
words, "and it was so", the accomplishment is recorded.
Nothing is said about means or method of accomplishment
that we may concentrate in wonder and adoration upon him
who alone can perform such a marvel. "Me will ye not fear,
saith the LORD, or from before me will ye not writhe, I
who have placed the sand as a boundary to the sea, an eternal
statute, nor will it pass over it" (Jer. 5:22a).

If process is here involved, Scripture does not mention
that fact; the entire stress appears to be upon the directness
with which the task was accomplished. At the same time, it
could well be that in this work of division there were tre-
mendous upheavals, so that the mountains were formed and
the processes of erosion set in motion.

The land is named, and from this point on the word in-
dicates the dry land in distinction from the ocean. Likewise,
the collection of the waters God called "seas", the word being
plural in order to indicate the extensive and vast surface
covered by water.

All has been preparatory for the second work of the third
day, the covering of the land with foliage. With his word God
empowers the earth to bring forth plants, and with this fact a
certain progress in the order of statement may be noted. Up
to this point all had been produced by God's creative word,
and all that was produced was inorganic; light, firmament,
gathering of waters, dry land. With God's command to the earth, however, there comes into existence objects that are organic, and yet do not move about.

The language of verse eleven is closely guarded, for it precludes the idea that life can originate apart from God or that the earth of itself can produce life. The earth upon which man is to live is one that is hospitable to him, providing him with seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees, but it is only the creative command of God which makes this possible. In vegetation there is distinction, as in the entire creation, so that all man's needs will be met. This distinction together with the idea of propagation according to its kind, supports the idea of order in the entire creation and yet at the same time emphasizes the individuality of each plant.

Lastly, it must be stressed that the plants and trees did

The word נָחַל in verse eleven, whatever its etymology, is a general term and is not the equivalent of our "species", as this word is technically employed. It does not rule out the production of freaks or the possibility of hybrids. It means merely that the producer will beget what is essentially the same as itself. Hence, this term clearly rules out the possibility of one "kind" reproducing anything that is essentially different from itself. It is perhaps impossible to state precisely what range is included by the term נָחַל. For that reason, it is wiser to speak in broad terms. The term would exclude the idea that man could have evolved from lower forms of life, from that which was not man. It would also exclude the idea that animal life came from plant life or that a fish might ever change into something essentially different from itself. Hence, caution must be exercised by those who classify animal and plant life. The following statement, appearing in Bezinning, loc. cit., p. 19, by J. Veldkamp, is untenable as well as incautious, "Evolutie is een vaststaand feit. Niet alleen de evolutie in de soorten (sprekende voorbeelden zijn de ontwikkelingsreeksen van zoogdieren, zoals paard, neushoorn en olifant), maar ook tussen de soorten (vergangen van vis naar amfibie, van amfibie naar reptiel, van reptiel naar vogel en zoogdier)." For one thing to describe the ontwikkelingsreeksen in the kinds, the term evolution is inaccurate. Nothing has developed in a manner that was not essentially according to its kind. Great caution must be exercised in describing the so-called changes within kinds. The last part of Veldkamp's statement cannot be defended.

"Es handelt sich hier lediglich um eine Einteilung der Pflanzen, die schon die praktische Verwertbarkeit fur Mensch and Tier anzeigt; and these praktische Einteilung hat zu jeder Zeit ihre Bedeutug" (Rabast, op. cit., p. 51). It should be noted also that the difference among the "kinds" of plants was original; they did not all "descend" from a common ancestor.
not have nor did they need the light of the sun. That this is a scientifically accurate description cannot be questioned, but Calvin's beautiful statement probably brings out the basic reason, "in order that we might learn to refer all things to him, he did not then make use of the sun or moon" (op. cit., in loc.). That the earth constantly produces for the benefit of man is not to be ascribed to "nature" but goes back to the creative Word of God.

The Fourth Day

If it be raised as an objection to the accuracy of the Genesis narrative that it is geocentric, the answer must be that it is geocentric only in so far as the earth is made the center of the writer's attention. Even though we are dealing with a divine revelation, nevertheless the human author was a holy man who spake from God (II Pet. 1:21), and he wrote from the standpoint of an earth dweller. The most advanced astronomer of our day will speak of the sunrise and the sunset and of sending up a rocket. Such language is geocentric, but it is not in error. Genesis one also speaks from the standpoint of the earth dweller, and in that respect may be labeled geocentric, but none of its statements is contrary to fact. It does not claim that the earth is the physical center of the universe.

By means of the work of the third day the earth was prepared to receive its inhabitants. Before they are placed upon the earth, however, the present arrangement of the universe must be constituted. For the regulation of earth's days and

98 "Durch bestimmte Experimente weiss man ferner, dass sogar die Pflanzen nicht vom Sonnenlicht abhangig sein mussen, so sehr sie es auch heute sind" (Rabast, op. cit., p. 69).

99 There is no evidence to support the contention of von Rad (op. cit., p. 53) that the earth is called to maternal participation in the act of creation, or that ancient thoughts about a "mother earth" are prominent here. Nor is Gunkel (op. cit., p. 104) correct in saying, "Zu Grunde liegt die Naturbeobachtung von der Fruchtbarkeit des Bodens, wenn er im Fruhling soeben austrocknet".

100 "It is not reflection on the Genesis account to say that it is geocentric. It is geocentric, because the earth is the abode of man and the scene of his redemption, the story of which is told in the Bible" (Allis: God Spake By Moses, Philadelphia, 1951, p. 12).
seasons, there must now be light from a specific source which will rule the day and the night.

Hence, the sun and moon are made, a truth which is reflected even in Enuma Elish. In the Babylonian document, however, the order is reversed, namely, stars, moon and sun. In the ancient oriental religions, the stars were considered to be divinities, and possibly for that reason appear first in Enuma Elish. In Genesis, however, mention of the stars appears almost as an afterthought. This is intentional, for while it brings the stars into the picture, it does so in such a way that they are not made prominent.101 Emphasis is placed, not upon the stars, but upon God, their maker.

Marduk, in the epic, entrusts night to the moon, and what is said of the moon calls to mind the more beautiful biblical statement, "the lesser light to rule the night" (Gen. 1:16). The existence of the sun, however, is assumed in the Babylonian document, and there is no express mention of its formation.102

101 Von Rad's comment (*op. cit.*, p. 43) is quite penetrating. "Vielleicht hängt mit dieser Betonung ihrer Kreaturlichkeit die merkwürdige Trennung von Lichtschöpfung und Erschaffung der Gestirne zusammen. Die Gestirne sind in keiner Weise lichtschöpferisch, sondern durchaus nur Zwischenträger eines Lichtes, das auch ohne sie und vor ihnen da war."

102 "Im babylonischen Schopfungsbericht ist die Erschaffung der Gestirne das erste Werk Marduks nach dem Drachenkampf." "Aber die Ähnlichkeit des Wortlauts der beiden Satze (i. e., Gen. 1:16 and Enuma Elish V. 12) macht hier den tiefen Abstand nur noch deutlicher. Der Mondgott Sin ist in Babylon einer der Hauptgotter; er war von überragender Bedeutung in ganz früher und dann wieder in ganz später Zeit; aber von ihm kann gesagt werden; dass er von einem anderen Gott geschaffen and in sein Herrschaftsamt eingesetzt ist!" (Westermann: *op. cit.*, p. 20). We may render Tablet V:1-4 as follows:

He erected stations for the great gods
The stars (kakkabani) their likenesses, the signs of the zodiac
(lu-ma-si) he set up
He fixed the year (satta), the signs he designed
For twelve months (arhe) he set three stars each.

The creation of the moon is related in V:12 ff.:
The moon (Nannar-ru) he caused to shine forth, the night he entrusted (to her)
He set her as an ornament (su-uk-nat) of the night unto the setting (i. e., the determining) of the days (a-na ud-du-u u-me).
Very different, however, is the narrative of Genesis. Here the sun is first mentioned, for the sun rules the day upon earth, and man, who is to rule the earth, needs the sunlight first and foremost. For the night time the lesser light-bearer is to rule. Of yet less importance for man are the stars, and hence they are mentioned last.

That the heavenly bodies are made on the fourth day and that the earth had received light from a source other than the sun is not a naive conception, but is a plain and sober statement of the truth. It should be noted, however, that the work of, the fourth day is not a creatio ex nihilo, but simply a making of the heavenly bodies. The material from which the sun, moon and stars were made was created, i. e., brought into existence, at the absolute beginning. On the fourth day God made of this primary material the sun and moon and stars, so that we may correctly assert that the creation of these heavenly bodies was completed on this day. In similar vein we may also say that on the third day the creation of our globe was completed, although the primal material of the globe was first brought into existence at the absolute beginning. If we were to employ the language of day four with respect to the first work of day three we might then say that although the earth (i. e., in its original form) was created in the beginning, nevertheless, on day three God made the earth. Inasmuch as this is so, the formation of the heavenly bodies may be presumed to have proceeded side by side with the work of the third day.

Monthly without ceasing with a tiara go forth (u-sir)
At the beginning of the month, (the time of) shining forth over the lands
With horns shalt thou shine for the determining of six days
On the seventh day (i-na um 7-kam) with half a crown.

side with that of the earth, and on day four their formation as sun, moon and stars was completed. The reason why Genesis says nothing about the step by step development of the heavenly bodies is that its purpose is to concentrate upon the formation of this earth.

The origin of heaven and earth, however, was simultaneous, but the present arrangement of the universe was not constituted until the fourth day. The establishment of this arrangement is expressed by the verb הֵֽלֵד, but we are not told how God "gave" or "set" these light-bearers in the firmament. What is of importance is to note that the universe is not an accidental arrangement, but was constituted in orderly fashion by God.

Day four and day one do not present two aspects of the same subject. Indeed, the differences between the two days are quite radical. On day one light is created (יָהֹוָה) on day four God makes light-bearers. No function is assigned to the light of day one, but several functions to the light-bearers. God himself divides the light which he has created from the darkness; the light-bearers are to divide between the light and the darkness. It is important to note this function. The light and the darkness between which the light-bearers are to make a division are already present. They have manifested themselves in the evening and morning which closed each day. How a division was hitherto made between them we are not told; it is merely stated that God divided between them (1:4). From the fourth day on, however, the division between them is to be made by light-bearers. This

104 "The creation of light, however, was no annihilation of darkness, no transformation of the dark material of the world into pure light, but a separation of the light from the primary matter, a separation which established and determined that interchange of light and darkness, which produces the distinction between day and night" (Keil: op. cit., p. 50). "Die Scheidung (i. e., between light and darkness) ist raumlich, indem die Lichtmasse and die Finsternismasse je eine Halfte des Chaos einnehmen, zugleich aber zeitlich indem Tag and Nacht entsteht" (Procksch: op. cit., p. 427).

105 רֹאְשָׁמ רֹאְשָׁמ luminary. Von Rad (op. cit., p. 42) thinks that the expression is intended to be prosaic and degrading (prosaisch and degradierend), and that these objects purposely are not named "sun" and "moon" in order to remove every tempting connection (in Umgehung jeder Versuchlichkeit). The words Shemesh and Yareach were of course names of divinities.
one consideration in itself is sufficient to refute the idea that
days one and four present two aspects of the same subject.
The light-bearers are made for the purpose of dividing be-
tween already existing light and darkness. Day four, we may
assert with all confidence, presupposes the existence of the
light which was created in day one and the darkness which
was mentioned in verse two.

The Fifth Day

With the fifth day progress in the writer's mode of state-
ment is apparent. There are now to be produced those crea-
tures which are animate and which move about. Moses uses
the verb $\text{ cread }$ to designate the creation of three varieties of
creatures, namely, the great sea monsters, every living thing
that moves about and every winged fowl. Upon all of
these a blessing is pronounced, and the content of that blessing
is given. By means of the work of the first four days the earth
is now prepared to receive life.

It goes without saying that day five does not form an
adequate parallel to day two. The sea creatures of day five
belong, not to the waters of day two but to the seas of the
first work of day three. The seas were formed in day three;
the primal waters, however, are mentioned as existing in
verse two. Furthermore, the realm in which the birds are to
rule is not the firmament but the earth, which also was made
in day three.

106 "Mit Nachdruck wird der Begriff $\text{ cread }$ v. 21 (cf. v. 27) dafür gebraucht
wie v. 1, weil das Leben gegenüber der leblosen Schopfung etwas spezifisch
Neues ist, aus ihren Stoffen und Kräften unableitbar" (Procksch: op. cit.,
p. 430). There is no evidence to support Procksch's statement, "der
Begriff $\text{ cread }$ entspricht der Theologie von P, der Begriff wsm einer alter-
tumlichen, von P wohl übernommenen Naturphilosophie, nach der,Mutter
Erde' alles Lebendige auf ihr gebiert (cf. $\psi$ 139, 15)" (op. cit., p. 431).
Aalders is in accord with the total scriptural emphasis when he writes,
"Het spreekt vanzelf dat we hier evenmin als bij de plantenwereld to
denken hebben aan een vermogen dat in de aarde zelf gelegen was ... 
door den Goddelijke wil kwamen de dieren uit de aarde voort" (op. cit.,
p. 93).
The Sixth Day

As on the third so on the sixth day two works are mentioned. On the third day the earth had brought forth plants and on the sixth it is to bring forth the animals. Instead, however, of a statement that the earth did bring forth the animals, we are told that God made them (verse 25). It may be that this manner of statement is deliberately chosen to refute the concept of a mother earth, for in many of the cosmogonies of antiquity it is the earth which of herself produces the animals. Here the emphasis is upon the fact that God made the animals.

At the same time at this point (verse 25) Moses uses כָּלַשׁ and not כָּלַע. With כָּלַע (in verse 21) there had followed an accompanying blessing (verse 22), and likewise in the second work of the sixth day a blessing accompanies כָּלַשׁ. Here there is no blessing, and hence; כָּלַשׁ is used. The blessing of the sixth day is not appended to each individual work but only to the second, the creation of man who is to rule over the animals. Hence, it may not be amiss to claim that indirectly, at least, the animals are blessed, even though no express blessing is pronounced over them.

That the creation of man is the crowning work of the narrative and presupposes what has previously been narrated, hardly needs to be mentioned. The second work of the sixth day presupposes the first, and both presuppose the work of the fifth day. Were this not so, the command to rule over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air (verse 28) would be meaningless.

That man is not merely one of the animals is also emphasized by the fact that God engages in deliberation with himself concerning the creation of man. Furthermore, man is created in the image of God, and upon him a divine blessing is pronounced in which his position as ruler over all things is set forth. The chapter then closes with a pronouncement as to

107 "Aber ebenso klar ist auch, dass der Mensch grundsätzlich von alien Tieren verschieden ist. Das wird sogar schon rein formal deutlich gemacht: Einerseits wechselt noch einmal das Metrum in den Gottesspruchen."
"Anderseits findet sich bei der Erschaffung des Menschen eine besondere feierliche Einleitung" (Rabast: op. cit., pp. 57, 58).
the nature of all that God had made, namely, that it was very good.

It is this remarkable fact of progression, both in method of statement and in actual content, which proves that the days of Genesis are to be understood as following one another chronologically. When to this there is added the plain chronological indications, day one, day two, etc., climaxing in the sixth day (note that the definite article appears only with the sixth day) all support for a non-chronological view is removed.

In this connection the question must be raised, "If a non-chronological view of the days be admitted, what is the purpose of mentioning six days?" For, once we reject the chronological sequence which Genesis gives, we are brought to the point where we can really say very little about the content of Genesis one. It is impossible to hold that there are two trios of days, each paralleling the other. Day four, as has already been pointed out, speaks of God's placing the light-bearers in the firmament. The firmament, however, had been made on the second day. If the fourth and the first days are two aspects of the same thing, then the second day also (which speaks of the firmament) must precede days one and four. If this procedure be allowed, with its wholesale disregard of grammar, why may we not be consistent and equate all four of these days with the first verse of Genesis? There is no defense against such a procedure, if once we abandon the clear language of the text. In all seriousness it must be asked, Can we believe that the first chapter of Genesis intends to teach that day two preceded days one and four? To ask that question is to answer it.

There is, of course, a purpose in the mention of the six days. It is to emphasize the great contrast between the unformed universe of verse two and the completed world of

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109 It should be noted that if the "framework" hypothesis were applied to the narratives of the virgin birth or the resurrection or Romans 5:12 ff., it could as effectively serve to minimize the importance of the content of those passages as it now does the content of the first chapter of Genesis.
verse thirty-one. Step by step in majestic grandeur God worked to transform the unformed earth into a world upon which man might dwell and which man might rule for God's glory. How noble and beautiful is this purpose, a purpose which is obscured and even obliterated when once we deny that the six days are to be taken in sequence. If Moses had intended to teach a non-chronological view of the days, it is indeed strange that he went out of his way, as it were, to emphasize chronology and sequence. We may recall the thought of Aalders that in the first chapter of Genesis there is not a hint that the days are to be taken as a mere form or manner of representation. In other words, if Moses intended to teach something like the so-called "framework theory" of the days, why did he not give at least some indication that such was his intention? This question demands an answer.

VII. The Real Problem in Genesis One

It is questionable whether serious exegesis of Genesis one would in itself lead anyone to adopt a non-chronological view of the days for the simple reason that everything in the text militates against it. Other considerations, it would seem, really wield a controlling influence. As it stands Genesis might be thought to conflict with "science". Can Genesis therefore be taken at face value? This type of approach, however, as we have been seeking to point out, must be rejected. One who reads the Gospels will receive the impression that the body of the Lord Jesus Christ actually emerged from the tomb and that he rose from the dead. But will not this first-hand impression cause needless stumbling-blocks in the path of faith? If we wish to rescue thoughtful people from a materialistic conception of life will not our purpose be harmed by an insistence upon miracle? As a recent writer has said, "The school of opinion that insists upon a physical resurrection will not satisfy a scientifically penetrating mind".

110 At least in a formal sense von Rad acknowledges this. "Wir sehen hier, das theologische Denken von 1. Mos. 1 bewegt sich nicht so zwischen der Polaritat: Nichts-Geschaffenes als vielmehr zwischen der Polaritat: Chaos-Kosmos" (op. cit., p. 39).
111 Conflict, p. 29.
Dare we reason in this way? If we do, we shall soon abandon Christianity entirely, for Christianity is a supernatural religion of redemption, one of its chief glories being its miracles. And this brings us to the heart of the matter. In the study of Genesis one our chief concern must not be to adopt an interpretation that is necessarily satisfying to the "scientifically penetrating mind". Nor is our principal purpose to endeavor to make the chapter harmonize with what "science" teaches. Our principal task, in so far as we are able, is to get at the meaning which the writer sought to convey.

Why is it so difficult to do this with the first chapter of the Bible? The answer, we believe, is that although men pay lip service to the doctrine of creation, in reality they find it a very difficult doctrine to accept. It is easy to behold the wonders of the present universe and to come to the conclusion that things have always been as they are now. To take but one example, the light of the stars, we are told, travelling at the rate of about 186,000 miles per second, in some instances takes years to reach this earth. Hence, men conclude it would have been impossible for the days of Genesis to have been ordinary days of twenty-four hours each.\(^{113}\)

In other words in employing an argument such as this, we are measuring creation by what we now know, and whether we wish or not, are limiting the power of God. Why could not God in the twinkling of an eye have formed the stars so that their light could be seen from earth? We cannot limit the creative power of God by what we today have learned from his providential working.

Those catechisms and creeds which have made a distinction between God's work of creation and his work of providence have exhibited a deep and correct insight into the teaching of Scripture.\(^{114}\) Creation and providence are to be distinguished,

\(^{113}\) Allis goes to the heart of the matter when he says "We need to remember, however, that limitless time is a poor substitute for that Omnipotence which can dispense with time. The reason the account of creation given here is so simple and so impressive is that it speaks in terms of the creative acts of an omnipotent God, and not in terms of limitless space and infinite time and endless process" (God Spake By Moses, p. 11). Cf. also Allis' excellent article, "The Time Element in Genesis 1 and 2" in Torch and Trumpet, Vol. VIII, No. 3 (July-August, 1958), pp. 16-19.

\(^{114}\) Thus, the Westminster Confession of Faith devotes a chapter to the
and it is not our prerogative, in the name of science, to place limits upon God's creative power. In a helpful article on "The Old Testament and Archaeology", William F. Albright wisely comments respecting the first chapter of Genesis, "In fact, modern scientific cosmogonies show such a disconcerting tendency to be short lived that it may be seriously doubted whether science has yet caught up with the Biblical story".  

If the church fathers had insisted that Genesis one conform to the "science" of their day, how tragic the result would have been. Had Luther done the same thing, the result would have been no better. And we must be cautious not to reject Scripture merely because at some points it may appear not to harmonize with what some modern scientists teach. Of one thing we may be sure; the statements of Genesis and the facts of nature are in perfect harmony.

The Bible does not state how old the earth is, and the question of the age of the earth is not the heart of the issue. What is the heart of the issue is whether God truly created or whether we, merely upon the basis of our observations of the universe, can place limits upon the manner in which God worked.

Although the Bible does not state the age of the earth, it does clearly teach that the world was created by the Word of God. The fiat was followed by the repetitive fulfillment. God spake, and his Word accomplished his will. It was a work of creation (chapter IV) and one to that of providence (chapter V). The same distinction appears in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Questions 15-17 of the Larger Catechism deal with creation and questions 18-20 with providence. The Shorter Catechism devotes two questions (9, 10) to the work of creation and two (11, 12) to that of providence.  

"Scientists, who speak in terms of light years, and add cipher to cipher in estimating the time of the beginning of things, ridicule the idea of twenty-four-hour days. But when they multiply thousands to millions and millions to billions and billions to trillions, figures practically cease to have any meaning, and they expose their own ignorance. From the standpoint of those who believe in a God who is omnipotent, and who recognize that time and space are finite and created 'things', this adding on of ciphers is absurd. It is a distinct feature of the miracles of the Bible that they are limited neither by time nor space" (Allis: God Spake By Moses, pp. 10 f.).
powerful word that brought his desires to pass. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:9); "by the word of God the heavens were of old" (II Pet. 3:5); "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3).  

Before the majestic declarations of Scripture we can but bow in humble reverence. How meager is our knowledge; how great our ignorance! Dare we therefore assert that only in such and such a manner the Creator could have worked? Are we really in possession of such knowledge that we can thus circumscribe him? Of course there is much in the first chapter of Genesis that we cannot understand. There is, however, one thing that, by the grace of the Creator, we may do. We may earnestly seek to think the thoughts of God after him as they are revealed in the mighty first chapter of the Bible. We can cease being rationalists and become believers. In the face of all the strident claims to the contrary we can believe, and we need never be ashamed to believe that "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is" (Ex. 20:11a).

VIII. Conclusion

From the preceding examination of Genesis one there are certain conclusions which may be drawn.

1. The pattern laid down in Genesis 1:1-2:3 is that of six days followed by a seventh.
2. The six days are to be understood in a chronological sense, that is, one day following another in succession. This fact is emphasized in that the days are designated, one, two, three, etc.  

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117 It must be noted, however, that process is not necessarily ruled out by the fiats. In the second work of the third day, for example, there could very well have been process. We cannot state to what extent process may have been present. Cf. Allis in Torch and Trumpet, vol. VIII, No. 3, p. 18.

118 There is no exegetical warrant to support the position (Lucerna, p. 645) expressed by H. Nieboer, "Gods scheppingsdagen (werk dagen of ook dagwerken) zijn steeds present en actueel (aldus dr. J. H. Diemer). De dagen-van-God zijn aspecten van zijn werkzaamheid, voorheen en
3. The length of the days is not stated. What is important is that each of the days is a period of time which may legitimately be denominated "day".

4. The first three days were not solar days such as we now have, inasmuch as the sun, moon and stars had not yet been made.

5. The beginning of the first day is not indicated, although, from Exodus 20:11, we may warrantably assume that it began at the absolute beginning, Genesis 1:1.

6. The Hebrew word און is used in two different senses in Genesis 1:5. In the one instance it denotes the light in distinction from the darkness; in the other it includes both evening and morning. In Genesis 2:4b the word is employed in yet another sense, "in the day of the LORD God's making".

7. If the word "day" is employed figuratively, i. e., to denote a period of time longer than twenty-four hours, so also may the terms "evening" and "morning", inasmuch as they are component elements of the day, be employed figuratively.

8. Although the account of creation is told in terms of fiat and fulfillment, this does not necessarily exclude all process. In the second work of the third day, for example, thans. Deze dagen zijn niet met menselijke tijdsmaatstaf te meten, evenmin als bijvoorbeeld bet duizendjarig rijk. Wie dus vraagt naar de tijdsduur van bijvoorbeeld de scheppingsdagen voor de vijfde dag en daarna, maakt vanuit dit standpunt gezien dezelfde fout als degene die na een uiteenzetting, in de eerste plaats dit, in de tweede plaats dat, vraagt naar de geografische bepaling en de afmetingen van die plaatsen; of na een betoog in verschillende stappen, naar de lengte in centimeters van die stappen."

119 "Man hat dafdr auf des רְבִי הלִי הָלַיון berufen (vgl. וָאִבְּרֶב יְהוָה בָּרֶך), aber verlieren denn diese Tage die Wahrheit ihres Wesens, wenn der Wechsel von Licht und Dunkel, nach welchem sich ihr Anfang und Ende bestimmt, nach anderen als irdischen zeitlangen gemessen ist und nach andern Gesetzen, als den nun innerhalb unseres Sonnensystems naturgemassen, erfolgt?" (Delitzsch: Commentar über die Genesis, Leipzig, 1860, p. 101). "but if day is used figuratively, evening and morning must likewise be" (John D. Davis: Genesis and Semitic Tradition, London, 1894, p. 17).
the language suggests that the vegetation came forth from the earth as it does today. This point, however, cannot be pressed.

9. The purpose of the six days is to show how God, step by step, changed the uninhabitable and unformed earth of verse two into the well ordered world of verse thirty-one.\textsuperscript{120}

10. The purpose of the first section of Genesis (1:1-2:3) is to exalt the eternal God as the alone Creator of heaven and earth, who in infinite wisdom and by the Word of his power brought the earth into existence and adorned and prepared it for man's habitancy. The section also prepares for the second portion of Genesis, the Generations, which deals with man's habitancy of God's world.

11. Genesis one is not poetry or saga or myth, but straightforward, trustworthy history, and, inasmuch as it is a divine revelation, accurately records those matters of which it speaks. That Genesis one is historical may be seen from these considerations. 1) It sustains an intimate relationship with the remainder of the book. The remainder of the book (i.e., The Generations) presupposes the Creation Account, and the Creation Account prepares for what follows. The two portions of Genesis are integral parts of the book and complement one another. 2) The characteristics of Hebrew poetry are lacking. There are poetic accounts of the creation and these form a striking contrast to Genesis one. 3) The New Testament regards certain events mentioned in Genesis one as actually having taken place. We may safely allow the New Testament to be our interpreter of this mighty first chapter of the Bible.

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\textsuperscript{120} One fact which Visee insists must be maintained in the study of Genesis one is "dat er ook een bepaalde volgorde was in dat werk Gods van 'lager' tot 'hoger', van minder 'tot meer' samengesteld, waarbij elk volgend geschapene het eerder geschapene vooronderstelde" (\textit{Lucerna}, p. 639).
THE CHRONOLOGY AND BIRTH OF JACOB'S CHILDREN BY LEAH AND HER HANDMAID

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In Genesis 29:31-30:24 the birth of twelve of Jacob's children is recorded. These children are the offspring of four different women, Leah and Rachel, his wives, and Zilpah and Bilhah, their respective handmaids.

It will be remembered that Jacob had bargained with Laban to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachel. Upon being deceived by Laban at the end of that seven years, Jacob was given Leah, the older daughter of the family. Through further bargaining and mutual agreement, for seven more years of service Jacob was given Rachel, the woman he loved, one week later.

In Genesis 30:25, 26 it seems the last seven years of service had been completed and the twelve children had been born. This fact will be challenged by some of the suggested interpretations. Jacob then says to Laban, his father-in-law, "Send me away, that I may go into my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service where-with I have served thee."

Now it is not difficult to understand how Jacob could have had twelve children in seven years from four different women. No doubt a number of the children could have been born contemporaneously. However, it is amazing to read that Leah gave birth to seven of the twelve children which were born at that time. Of course, there is nothing

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biologically impossible about having seven children in seven years, but the real problem arises when we learn that during that seven year period, "Leah saw that she left off bearing, so she took Zilpah her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, 'Fortunate!' and she called his name Gad. And Zilpah Leah's handmaid bear Jacob a second son. And Leah said, 'Happy am I!' For the daughters will call me happy! and she called his name Asher" (Gen. 30:9-13). How could Leah have borne seven children and have had a barren period in which her handmaid bore two children, all in seven years? Or did these events occupy some period other than seven years?

It may be granted that this is not a problem of great theological significance, but nevertheless it dare not be overlooked if the authority and integrity of the Word of God is highly valued. In fact, whether naturally or supernaturally, it must be answered if the inerrancy of the Scripture is not to be sacrificed.

SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS

I. The births took place during two twenty year periods of service that Jacob gave Laban.

The basis of this interpretation is found in Gen. 31:38, 41. In these verses Jacob mentions twenty years of service to Laban two times. This interpretation holds that the two sets of twenty years are different periods and make a total of forty years in Laban's house. Each mention of twenty years is introduced with the word zeh, which word, when repeated, is used by way of distinction; as when we say, this or that; the one or the other. The following passages are cited as confirming this translation. "So that the one came not near the other" (Ex. 14:20). "This hath more rest than the other" (Eccl. 6:5). The word zeh is used twice at a greater distance, "one dieth . . . and another dieth" (Job 21:23,25). Clark goes on to explain it as follows:

So here in Genesis 31:38 Jacob says to Laban, "during the one set of twenty years I was with thee. . . ." Meaning the time in which he lived, not in Laban's house, but in his neighborhood; not as a servant but as a friend; after he had served in Laban's house fourteen years for his cattle. But then, as to the other twenty, he tells Laban at verse 41, "during the other twenty years for myself (own benefit) in thy house; I served thee fourteen, and six years." And during the last period though only six years, he charges Laban with changing his wages ten times.
It should be observed that this interpretation is proposed, not only to answer this problem, but also to solve many related problems with the Biblical chronology of the period of the Bible patriarchs, Isaac and Jacob. For instance, this longer period of time at Laban's house gives relief to a very crowded chronology of events in the life of Jacob. With this system of calculation Jacob would have left his home to find his wife twenty years earlier, or at approximately fifty-seven years of age. This age for Jacob to go looking for a wife harmonizes better with the marriage age (40) of both Isaac and Esau than the traditional view of seventy-seven.

Also, if Jacob had no son till he was eighty-five, and he went to Egypt at one hundred and thirty, with sixty-six persons, only forty-five years are allowed for his family, whereas the larger sum of sixty-five years seems necessary for the births of so many children and grandchildren. This view also has the advantage of assigning such ages to Simeon, Levi, Dinah, Benjamin, Judah, Er, and Onan as harmonize with the events described in chapters 34 and 35.

Then there is the problem of harmonizing the dates of the patriarchs with the exodus. John Rea has dealt with this matter in his doctoral dissertation, "The Historical Setting of the Exodus and the Conquest." Calculating from external sources, it would seem that Jacob was only a young man of about eighteen years of age when he left home. Of course, that age does not tally with the Scriptural indication of his age. The Bible tells us that when Jacob was presented in the court of Pharaoh, "the days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my father:s in the days of their sojournings" (Gen. 47:9, RSV). By making calculations based on the life of Joseph we learn that there was an interval of about thirty-three years between the time when Jacob returned from Haran and when he went down to sojourn in Egypt. If Jacob was one hundred and thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, then he must have been ninety-seven when he came back to Canaan. If Jacob was with Laban only twenty years, then he was seventy-seven years old when he left home. This is an extreme contradiction with the ancient history calculation of eighteen years of age. This conflict can be relieved a bit by making Jacob's stay with Laban forty years instead of twenty. He would have gone from home at fifty-seven. It is interesting to note, however, that Rea is not at all interested in accepting this interpretation to help resolve some of the distance between the calculation from ancient history and the seeming Scriptural chronology. He briefly discards the view in a footnote, saying, "I cannot agree that there are two different periods of twenty years each referred to in Genesis 31:38 and 41, the view of R. Payne Smith."² What seems to be the
reason for so little consideration of a view that seemingly aids in solving a number of quite thorny problems?

The main refutation and weakness of this interpretation lies in the grammar of the text. As has been noted, the proponents of this view lay great emphasis upon the construction of the two clauses which mention the twenty years of service. Each clause is introduced with the word *zeh*. They proceed to claim that when *zeh* is repeated, it is used by way of distinction; as when we say this or that; the one or the other; and Scripture passages are cited to confirm this translation.

The writer was impressed by the fact that not one Hebrew scholar whom he confronted with the suggested translation for this theory could find any justifiable evidence in the text for such a translation. The whole scheme breaks down when once it is observed that in each of the passages used to confirm their point, when *zeh* is repeated, it is always connected with the *waw* conjunctive. The *waw* conjunctive is the device used in the language in such cases to convey the idea of distinction. Without the *waw* conjunctive there is nothing to indicate this idea. In Genesis 31:38 and 41, where the two clauses mentioning the twenty years of service are introduced by *zeh*, there is no *waw* conjunctive. Therefore, it may be reasonably concluded that these two clauses are not arranged to imply two different periods of twenty years but rather to emphasize the significance of the one twenty year period in the mind of Laban. The following is an arrangement of the chronology of Jacob's life according to this view:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Jacob and Esau born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Esau marries 2 Hittite wives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Jacob goes to Haran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Esau marries Ishmael's daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Ishmael dies at 137 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Jacob dies at 137 years of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Reuben born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Simeon born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Levi born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Dan born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Naphtali born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Gad born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Asher born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Reuben, at 13, finds mandrakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Issachar born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Zebulun. (82, Dinah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Judah marries Shuah at 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Er born (88, Onan; 89, Shelah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Joseph born of Rachel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE CHRONOLOGY AND BIRTH OF JACOB'S CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91-97</td>
<td>Six years of service for the cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Jacob comes from Haran to Succoth (Dinah defiled)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Benjamin born, Rachel dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Tamar married to Er (106 to 108)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Joseph (17) sold into Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Shelah at 20 not given to Tamar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>Pharez and Zaran born of Tamar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Isaac dies (180)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Joseph (30) made governor of Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Beriah, 20, marries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Heber (127, Malchiel) born to Beriah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Pharez at 18 marries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Hezron (130), Hamul) born to Pharez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Benjamin at 32 has 10 sons, and Jacob goes to Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Jacob dies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. *Four of the births took place during the last seven year period of service for Jacob’s wives and the remaining births occurred during the six year period of service for Jacob’s flocks.*

Those who hold to this view suggest that if Jacob's first child was born in the first year of his second period of service, and if the other births followed in the order in which they are enumerated in chapter 30, it is impossible that Leah could have borne her six sons and one daughter and Rachel could have borne afterwards Joseph by the end of the period, so that the new contract could be made at the beginning of the fifteenth year. It is, therefore, suggested that some of the births must be allowed to occur in the third period of service. It is felt that the "text has nothing against this; for the expression, my service, i.e. (30:26) my time of service, need not necessarily be restricted to the seven years of 29:18 and 27. It is thus clear that this verse is not from the author of 31:41.*

This view assumes too much. First, it assumes the impossibility of the birth of twelve children in seven years. This conclusion is made upon the felt demand that the births followed each other in the order enumerated. There is nothing in the text to forbid the possibility of contemporaneous births on more than one occasion. A more positive proof of this possibility will appear later. Secondly, it assumes that the expression, "my service, " (30:26) need not be restricted to the seven year periods, but may be as well projected to include the following six year
period. But the text does not read this way. In 30:25 it is not until Rachel has borne Joseph, that Jacob asks to be sent away. It is then following this (30:27-30) that Laban bargains with Jacob to stay another six years. Joseph had to be born before the six year period of Jacob's service for Laban's cattle. Thirdly, it assumes that the author of 30:26 is not the author of 31:41. The critical evidence for this is not final and is based upon a superficial reading of the text. This conclusion is not valid and is dangerous for the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. The following is an arrangement of the chronology for the dates of the births:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of Child</th>
<th>Wife or Handmaid of Jacob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reuben</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Simeon</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Levi</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Bilhah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Naphtali</td>
<td>Bilhah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Asher</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Issachar</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Zebulun</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dinah</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. *The birth of the six sons of Leah took place during the last seven year period of service for Jacob’s wives, and the birth of Dinah, the daughter, was sometime after this period.*

This view, it seems to the writer, is only held in order to relieve the congested period of seven years in which it would seem that Leah had seven children. The grammatical construction, however, would not seem to prevent this conclusion. The proponents say, "with regard to the birth of Dinah, the expression ‘afterward’ (*hr*, 30:21) seems to indicate that she was not born during Jacob's second seven years of service, but during the remaining six years of his stay with Laban."

This problem with this view arises when we come to chapter 34. Here we read that Jacob had left Padan-aram and was dwelling in peace at Shechem. At this time Shechem, the Hivite, the son of the prince, took Dinah with him and seduced her. This event had to take place at least a year before Joseph was seventeen (37:2). If Dinah was born any length of time after Joseph, say the second year of Jacob's, six year service for Laban's cattle, this would make Dinah fourteen years old or
even less when this experience with Shechem occurred. This would seem quite unlikely biologically and would cause one to wonder why Jacob did not keep a closer eye upon such a young girl. It is felt by the writer that there was a wilful cooperation in this act of defilement. The following is a chronology of the births according to this arrangement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Name of Child</th>
<th>Wife or Handmaid of Jacob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reuben</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Simeon</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Levi</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Bilhah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Naphtali</td>
<td>Bilhah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Asher</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Issachar</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Zebulun</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dinah</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WRITER’S INTERPRETATION**

*The Interval of Time*

The seven births took place within the second seven year period that Jacob served Laban for his wives. The fallacy of accepting the possibility of two twenty year periods of service for Laban was explained under interpretation I. Under interpretation II, we showed the danger of assuming too much. To say that some of the births took place during the six year period of Jacob's service for cattle goes beyond what the text says. A simple literal interpretation of the text would lead one to conclude that the births all occurred during the second seven year period of service.

*The Arrangement of the Period*

Since we have determined the period to be confined to the seven years, the arrangement of the births in the seven years must be dealt with. Now if all the children, whose births are given in 29:32-30:24, had been born one after another during the period mentioned, not only would Leah have had seven children in seven years, but there would have been a considerable interval also, during which Rachel's maid and her
own maid gave birth to children. This, of course, would have been impossible and the text does not really demand it.

When we bear in mind that the imperfect tense with the *waw* consecutive expresses not only the order of time, but also the order of thought as well it becomes apparent that in the history of the births, the intention to arrange them according to the mothers prevails over the chronological order. Therefore, it by no means follows that because the passage, "when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children" (30:1) occurs after Leah is said to have had four sons, that it was not until after the birth of Leah's fourth child that Rachel becomes aware of her barrenness.

There is nothing on the part of grammar to prevent the arrangement of events in this way. Leah's first four births follow as rapidly as possible one after the other. In the meantime, not necessarily after the birth of Leah's fourth child, Rachel, having discovered her own barrenness, had given her maid to Jacob; so that possibly both Dan and Naphtali were born before Judah. The rapidity and regularity with which Leah had borne her first four sons, would make her notice all the more quickly the cessation that took place (30:9). Jealousy of Rachel, as well as the success of the means which she had adopted, would impel her to attempt in the same method to increase the number of her children.

Moreover, Leah herself may have conceived again before the birth of her handmaid's second son and may have given birth to her last two sons and her daughter, Dinah, in the fifth, sixth, and seventh years of their marriage. Contemporaneously with the birth of Dinah, or immediately afterwards, Rachel may have given birth to Joseph. The following is a chronology of Jacob's life according to this view and a chart indicating the arrangement of the births of the twelve children in seven years.

**Chronology of Jacob's Life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Jacob and Esau born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Esau marries 2 Hittite wives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Ishmael dies, age 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Jacob goes to Haran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Jacob marries Leah and Reuben born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Simeon born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Levi born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Dan born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Judah born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Naphtali born</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Gad born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Asher born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Issachar born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Zebulun born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Dinah born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Joseph born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Jacob returns to Haran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Jacob dwells at Succoth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Jacob comes to Shechem and continues 8 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Judah marries Shuah's daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Er born (103, Onan; 104, Shelah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Shechemites destroyed by Levi and Simeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Benjamin. born, Rachel dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Joseph sold at 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Tamar married to Er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Tamar's incest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Pharez and Zaran born to Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Isaac dies at 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Joseph made governor in Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Jacob goes to Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>Jacob dies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arrangement of Births

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Name of Child</th>
<th>Wife or Handmaid of Jacob</th>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dan</td>
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<td>Naphtali</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Asher</td>
<td>Zilpah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Issachar</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zebulun</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dinah</td>
<td>Leah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Rachel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5. Calculation begins from the first year of Jacob's marriage to Leah.


7. Calculation begins from the first year of Jacob's marriage to Leah.

8. Leah's barren period is from 4-5 to 4-12.

9. Calculation begins from the first year of Jacob's marriage to Leah.

10. Leah's barren period is from 4-3 to 5-7.

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