

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.¹ 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'";² 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 chiasmic 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 chiasmically structured (109-119). It should be noticed, however, that the postulated chiasms are mainly based on conceptual and only partly on terminological considerations.

² Lambe, 102. Cf. J. A. Emerton, "Some Problems in Genesis 38," *VT* 25 (1975): 338-361; idem, "An Examination of a Recent Structuralist Interpretation of Genesis 38," *VT* 26 (1976), 79-98; idem, "Judah and Tamar," *VT* 29 (1979), 403-415; C. Westermann, *Genesis*, BKAT 1/3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 42; Chr. Levin, *Der Jahwist*, FRLANT 157 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 271; G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, WBC 2 (Dallas: Word, 1994), 363-365. E. Blum considers Gen 38 to be "eine überlieferungsgeschichtlich einheitliche Erzählung, die zudem als ursprünglich selbständige Einzelerzählung vom Kontext der Josephgeschichte abzuheben ist" (*Die Komposition der Vätergeschichte*, WMANT 57 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1984], 224). Th. Kruger raises anew objections to the literary coherence of this story, claiming that "Gen 38 seine vorliegende Gestalt im Zusammenhang der nachexilischen Diskussion fiber die Möglichkeit eines Konubiums nur Nicht judaern bzw. Nicht Juden erhalten hat" ("Genesis 38-EM 'Lehrstück' alttestamentlicher Ethik," in *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte. Festschrift für Klaus Baltzer zum 65. Geburtstag*, OBO 126, ed., R. Bartelmus, Th. Kruger and H. Utzschneider [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993], 205-226).

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

³ Menn, 79, and n. 134; cf. U. Cassuto, "The Story of Tamar and Judah," *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1973), 29-40; Wenham, 365.

⁴ E.g., Westermann, 42, maintains that Gen 38 is "eine in sich abgeschlossene Einzelerzählung; ... Die Erzählung von Judah and Tamar ist nicht, wie bisher gesagt wurde, in die Josephgeschichte eingefügt worden, sie hat mit ihr nichts zu tun, sondern in die Jakobgeschichte bzw. den Schlull der Jakobgeschichte (Gn 37 Vorlage and 46-50)" (his emphasis). R. Rendtorff interprets Gen 38 as a Judahite continuation of the Jacob story which has been inserted together with Gen 49 (*Das Alte Testament. Eine Einführung* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983] 145). Blum, 224, considers Gen 38 as "ursprünglich selbständige Einzelüberlieferung [die] vom Kontext der Josephgeschichte abzuheben ist." Because of its theology, Kruger, 205-226, prefers an exilic-postexilic date for Gen 38; H.-Ch. Schmitt maintains: "Somit spricht alles dafür, dass es sich bei dem Verfasser von Gen 38 um einen schriftgelehrten Kenner der theologischen Tradition seiner Zeit handelt. Da er dabei sowohl auf das Deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk als auch auf das Heiligkeitsgesetz Bezug nimmt, kann durchaus damit gerechnet werden, dass es sich auch bei ihm um den in Gen 48-50 beobachteten nachpriesterlichen spätdeuteronomistischen Redaktor handelt, der Pentateuch und Deuteronomistisches Geschichtswerk miteinander verbinden will" ("Die Josephgeschichte and das deuteronomistische Geschichtswerk Genesis 38 and 48-50," in *Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic Literature. Festschrift C. H. W. Brekelmans*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 133, ed. J. van Ruiten and M. Vervenne [Leuven: University Press, 1997], 403). Cf. J. A. Soggin, *Das Buch Genesis. Kommentar* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 445-454.

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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 עלה "go up"⁸ and the noun ארץ "land"⁹ appear both for the *seventh* time in the unique statement: כִּי יִּי אֲנִי הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם "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 מצרים "the land of Egypt,"¹⁰ comes to light. Within this terminological pattern a carefully construed chiasmic 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.

⁵ R. Rendtorff, *Leviticus*, BK.AT 3, 1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985), 4.

⁶ W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus*, Biblical Interpretation Series 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

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.

¹⁰ Lev 11:47; 18:3; 19:34, 36; 22:33; 23:43; 25:38, 42, 55; 26:13, 45; cf. Warning, 139-142.

Terminological Patterns Within Genesis 38

The Verb נתן

The eight occurrences of the common verb נתן "give" (2011/150)¹¹ 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 chiasmically 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?"

9	זרע לאתיו	נתן	לבבתי
14 A	לו לאשה	לא נתנה	כי ראתה כי גדל שלה והוא
16 B	לי כי תבוא אלי	מה תתן	ותאמר
17 C	ערבון עד שלחך	אם תתן	ותמאר
18a C		ויאמר מה העררון אשר אתן לך	
18b B	לו ותהר	לה ויבוא אליה ותהר לו	ויתן
26 A	לשלה בני	לא נתתיה	כי על כן
28	יד	ויתן	ויהי בלדתה

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]).

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as a pledge prior to having sexual intercourse.

The Verb **בוא**

By means of intricately interrelating the six occurrences of the verb **בוא** (**אל**) "come (into)" (2,565/150) in each case denoting "to have intercourse with," with two of the five occurrences of the verb **הרה** "conceive, be pregnant" (54/22),¹² an impressive inclusion has been created. The inclusio, being based both on terminological and thematic correspondence, is construed by the verbatim statement **ויה ויה ויה ויה ויה ויה** "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?"

2-3	אליה ותהר ותלד בן	ויבא	ויקחה
8	אל אשת אחיך	בא	ויאמר יהודה לאונן
9	אל אשת אחיו	בא	והיה אם
16a	אליך	אבוא	ויאמר הבה נא
16b	אלי	תבוא	מה תתן לי כי ותאמר
18	אליה ותהר לו	ויבא	ויתן לה

By way of deliberately distributing the two "procreative verbs"¹³ **בוא** **אל** and **הרה**, 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 שם

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).¹⁴ In view of this fact it may be more than accidental that the seventh time the noun שם "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."¹⁵

1	תירח	ושמו	ויט עד איש עדלמי
2	שוע	ושמו	וירא שם יהודה בת איש כנעני
3	ער	שמו	ויקרא את
4	אונן	שמו	ותקרא את
5	שלה	שמו	ותקרא את
6	תמר	שמה	
29	פרץ	שמו	ויקרא
30	זרח	שמו	ויקרא

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,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 נתן and בוא and the noun שם, 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.

¹⁴ J. M. Sasson, "Generation, Seventh," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement* (1976), 355.

¹⁵ Menn, 28.

¹⁶ Cf. Menn, 82.

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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 (נָטָה) her widow's clothes (v. 14); and in order to hide behind anonymity, she had better cover (כִּסָּה) 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 (הִטָּה) 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 (בָּגְדָה) (v. 19).

According to many commentators, Gen 38 should be seen as an originally independent narrative standing clearly outside of the Joseph story.¹⁷ 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,¹⁸ whereas

¹⁷ E.g., Rendtorff, *Einführung*, 145; Blum, 224; Soggin, 452-453; cf. C. Paap, *Die Josephsgeschichte Genesis 37-50: Bestimmungen ihrer literarischen Gattung in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, European University Studies. Series XXIII: Theology, vol. 534 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995).

¹⁸ Levin, 51: J^Q = pre-Jahwistic sources ("vorjahwistische Quellen"); J^R = Jahwist redaction ("jahwistische Redaktion"); J^S = post-Jahwistic additions ("nachjahwistische Ergänzungen"); P = Priestly Source ("Priesterschrift"); R = final redaction ("Endredaktion"); R^S = "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 סור

The distribution of the verb סור "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:

8:13	נח את מכסה התבה	ויסר	J ^R
19:2	נא אל בית עבדכם	הנה נא אדני סורו	J ^Q
3	אליו ויבאו אל ביתו	ויסרו	J ^Q
30:32	משם כל שה נקד וטלוא	הסר	J ^R
35	התישים העקדים ביום ההוא את	ויסר	J ^R
35:2	את אלהי הנכר אשר בתככם	הסרו	J ^S
38:14	בגדי אלמנותה מעליה	ותסר	J ^S
	ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף		
19	בגדי אלמנותה	ותסר ותלך	J ^S
	צעיפה מעלה ותלבש		
41:42	פרעה את טבעתו מעל ידו	ויסר	J ^S
48:17	אתה מעל ראש אפרים	להסיר	J ^S
49:10	שבט מיהודה	לא יסור	R ^S

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).

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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, סור and כסה, would appear accidentally in a single sentence, "She took off [ותסר] her widow's clothes, and covered [ותכס] herself with a veil to disguise herself" (v. 14ax), we should reckon with some author's deliberate structural design:

7:19	והמים גברו מאד מאד על הארץ	ויכסו	כל ההרים הגבהים	P
20	חמש עשרה אמה	ויכסו	ההרים	P
	מלמעלה גברו המים			
9:23	את ערות אביהם	ויכסו		J ^R
18:17	אמר המכסה אני מאברהם	ויי		R ^S
24:65	ותקח הצעיף	ותתכס		J ^S
37:26	את דמו	וכסונו		J ^R
38:14	ותסר בגדי אלמנותה מעליה	ותכס	בצעיף ותתעלף	J ^S
15	ויראה יהודה ויחשבה לזונה כי	כסתה	פניה	J ^S

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 נטה "turn" which will be considered next.

The Verb נטה

The overall distribution of the verb נטה "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 [ויט] 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):

12:8	אהלה	ויט		J ^Q
24:14	נא כדך ואשתה	הטי		J ^R
26:25	שם אהלו	ויט		J ^S
33:19	שם אהלו	נטה	... אשר	R ^S
35:21	אהלה	ויט	ויסע ישראל	J ^R
38:1	איש עדלמי ושסו חירה	ויט		J ^S
	עד			
16	הבה נא אבוא אליך	ויט		J ^S
	אליה אל הדרך ויאמר			
39:21	אליו חסד	ויט	ויהי יי את יוסף	J ^R
49:15	שכמו לסבל	ויט		R ^S

The five preceding structures based on the verbs **נתן**, **בוא**, **סור**, **כסה**, and **נטה** 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 **סור** and **כסה** 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 [**בגדי אלמנותה**] again" (38:19):

24:53	ויתן לרבקה	ובגדים	... ויוצא העבד	J ^R
27:15	עשו	בגדי	ותקח רקבה את	J ^Q
27	ויברכהו	בגדיו	וירח את ריח	J ^Q
28:20	ללבש	ובגד	ונתן לי לחם לאכל	J ^S
37:29		בגדיו	ויקרע את	R ^S

38:14	אלמנותה מעליה ותכס בצעיף ותתעלף	בגדי	ותסר	J ^S
19	אלמנותה	בגדי	ותסר צעיפה מעליה ותלבש	J ^S
39:12a		בבגדו	ותתפשחו	J ^Q
12b	בידה	בגדו	ויעזב	J ^Q
13	בידה	בגדו	כראותה כי עזב ויהי	R ^S
15	אצלי	בגדו	ויעזב	R ^S
16	אצלה	בגדו	ותנח	J ^Q
18	אצלי	בגדו	ויעזב	R ^S
41:42	שש וישם רבד הזהב על צוארו	בגדי	וילבש אתו	J ^S

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

¹⁹ V. H. Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative," *JSOT* 65 (1995), 28. Cf. Warning, 86-88, who calls attention to the striking בגד-structure in Lev 16. Whereas the majority of scholars view this chapter as composite, a close reading of the extant text reveals an impressive seven-part chiasmic structure, by means of which Lev 16 shows itself as a creatively composed literary whole:

4	A	קדש הם	בגדי	
23	B	הבד	בגדי	ופשט את
24	C		בגדיו	ולבש את
26	C		בגדיו	והמשלח את השעיר לעזאזל יכבס
28	C		בגדיו	והשרף אתם יכבס
32b«	B	הבד	בגדי	ולבש את
32bp	A	הקדש	בגדי	

significant role. Six occurrences of the nominal form **בגדו** ("his garment") in Gen 39 are capped by the seventh **בגדי שש** "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 **בגדיו** "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 **בגד** 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,"²¹ 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,"²² 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.

²¹A. Alonso-Scholke, "Hermeneutical Problems of Literary Study of the Bible," *VTSup Congress Volume 28. Edinburgh 1974* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 7.

²²R. Knierim, *Text and Concept in Leviticus 1:1-9: A Case in Exegetical Method*, *Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 2.

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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.

²³ A. G. van Aarde, "Historical Criticism and Holism: Heading Toward a New Paradigm?," in *Paradigms and Progress in Theology*, ed. J. Mouton et al. (NP: HSRC Studies in Research Methodolo , 1988), 54.

²⁴ Blenkinsopp, 1.

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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.¹ 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.

¹ B. Childs, "Tree of Knowledge, Tree of Life," *IDB* 4 (1962), 695. Cf. H. Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), p. 108.

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

² E. O. James, *The Tree of Life* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), p. 41.

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. Lundequistka, 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.

⁵ See the translation by E. A. Speiser in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by J. B. Pritchard, (2nd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University, 1955) pp. 101, 102.

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.⁷ 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.⁸

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,⁹ or that we are dealing with two originally separate accounts, each having a different

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.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.)¹¹ (2) The syntax of Genesis 3:22 is also more difficult than Speiser's rendering of it would indicate.¹² Furthermore, verses 23 and 24 are taken by some to be a doublet, thus giving another indication of more than one source.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).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.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.

¹⁰ G. von Rad, *Genesis* (OTL 1; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 76-77. Cf. J. Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC 1; 2d ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1930) 52-53, 58; and C. A. Simpson, "Genesis," *IDB* 1 (1952) 496.

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," *JSS* 1 (1956) 193ff.; and R. Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the OT and the Qumran Scrolls," *JBL* 76 (1957) 123ff.

¹² See the comments by Speiser, 24, on the words rendered in the RSV "Behold" (Heb *hen*) and "and now" (Heb *we`atta*).

¹³ Thus Skinner, 88-89. On the cherubim and flaming sword, see Speiser, 24-25, and von Rad, 94-95.

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.

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.¹⁶ However, the clear implication of verses 22-24 is that a punishment is being carried out and not that a favor is being shown.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ 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

¹⁶ J. Willis, *Genesis* (Living Word Commentary; Austin: Sweet, 1979) 135-136.

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.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).

¹⁹ D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (London: SCM, 1966) 89-92.

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TOWARD A LITERARY UNDERSTANDING OF "FACE TO FACE" (פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים) 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 פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים, 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 פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים is selectively used in five separate passages, one of which is Gen

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 (פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים)." This Hebrew phrase is reserved for encounters between the human and the divine, and although פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים 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 פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים 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 nature⁴ of the Samaritans, it is quite noteworthy⁵ when the SP attests a different text from the MT in the פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים 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, transcendentalize⁶ 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 32:23-33⁷ (with the identity of Jacob's assailant the

⁴ See R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1969) 222.

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 *face to face* seems to have been lost in the theological shadow of *Elohim*. Consequently, since the nature of פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים 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,⁸ and his conclusions have been repeatedly confirmed.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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 32-33¹¹ and the name changes in verses 29 and 31¹² 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 story¹³ in which the precise nature of Jacob's פְּנִים אֶל-פְּנִים encounter at the Jabbok acts as the *supporting evidence* for the central

⁸ He noted that the previous pericope ends with "lodged that night," but v. 23 starts with "he rose up that night," thereby indicating that a new unit has begun. Samuel Driver, *The Book of Genesis* (London: Methuen, 1904) 294.

⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 266; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985), 512; Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 314; Hermann Gunkel, *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).

¹⁰ This distinction is further elaborated in 4. Literary Context.
" For example, see von Rad, *Genesis*, 318; George Coats, *Genesis* (FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 230; and Brueggemann, *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).

¹² See Gunkel, *Genesis*, 353; and E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1964) 256-57.

¹³ See Westermann, *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).

element:¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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 land¹⁶ 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 chiasmic 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 chiasmic analysis,¹⁷ presented below, identifies not only that the births are the centre of the narrative, but more importantly, that the events of Jacob's אֶל-פְּנִים struggle at Penuel correspond to Jacob's previous dream of God at Bethel.

- Conflict with Esau (25:19-34; 27:1-45; 27:46-28:9)
 - [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)

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 וַיֹּאמֶר (and he said), draws the reader to the central point (the fourth וַיֹּאמֶר) 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 אֱלֹהִים. 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 summary¹⁸ below, the solitary¹⁹ events that took place between verses 23 and 33 dramatically changed Jacob's priorities.

	יַעֲקֹב	אֱלֹהִים	יְעֹשׂוּ	family ²⁰	possessions ²¹
32:1-22	9	3	9	3	24
32:23-33	7	2	0	0	0
33:1-17	3	3	6	15	5

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 אֱלֹהִים-פְּנִים encounter is between Jacob and אֱלֹהִים 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.

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 אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ, which refers to all that Jacob had. In addition, the beginning of v. 25 makes Jacob's separation even clearer by the use of וַיִּהְיֶה יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ (and Jacob was alone).

²⁰ Includes "mother, children, descendants, Rachel, Leah, Joseph, women."

²¹ Includes "cattle, donkeys, flocks, camels, ewes, rams, goats, hulls, 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 totality²² rather than as referring to two separate entities (i.e., the identification of אֱלֹהִים 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 12:4-5,²³ which states that Jacob contended with אֱלֹהִים and also struggled with a מַלְאָךְ (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 בָּ, perfective verbs, אָתָּה), 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 theme²⁴--Jacob's struggle²⁵ with his adversary. In fact, this four-line unit also has an inherent chiastic structure of its own, as shown in

²² Westermann, *Genesis 12-36*, 518.

²³ As in Genesis 32, the verse numbering in Hosea 12 will follow the MT.

²⁴ Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah* (Dallas: Word, 1987) 190.

²⁵ שָׁרָה in v. 4 and either שָׁרָה (a by-form of שָׁרָה) or שָׁרָה in v. 5.

the text below, further clarifying the intentional correspondence between מַלְאָךְ and אֱלֹהִים.

- 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 scholars²⁸ to explain verse 5a as parallel to events in Jacob's life²⁹ other than his wrestling at the Jabbok (e.g., Gen 30:8), Hosea is simply referring to Jacob's physical struggle with אֱלֹהִים and is as ambiguous about the identity of his assailant as is the narrator of the Genesis account. For Hosea, the אֱלֹהִים with whom Jacob contended is not to be understood as God himself but rather as corresponding to מַלְאָךְ, 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 אֱלֹהִים 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.

²⁸ Francis Anderson and David Noel Freedman, *Hosea* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1980) 608-14.

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 אֱלֹהִים, the Greek term θεός used in verse 31 ("I saw θεόν 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 πρὸς πρόσωπον) in the Septuagint text of verse 30. In his speech, Jacob declared, "I saw (ὄρᾶω, 2d aorist active) θεόν face to face" reflecting the corresponding Hebrew syntax of "I have seen (הִרְאָה, Qal) אֱלֹהִים 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 אֱלֹהִים - פְּנִים 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

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 אֱלֹהִים/θεός, 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 פְּנִים אֶל־פְּנִים, 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 אֱלֹהִים 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 פְּנִים אֶל־פְּנִים 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 "weltanschauung" ("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

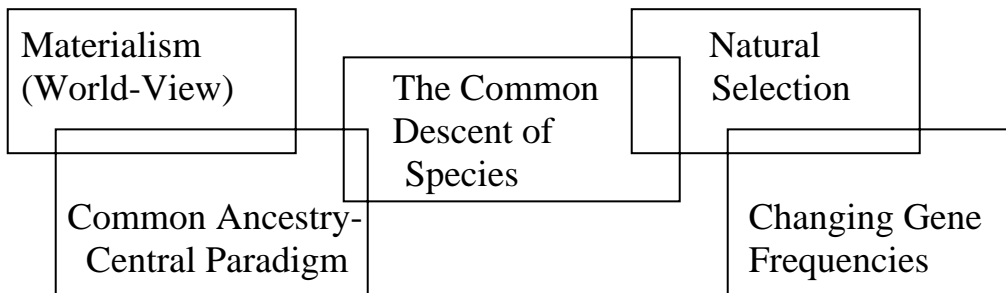


Figure 1. Evolution -- How to not define a word precisely.

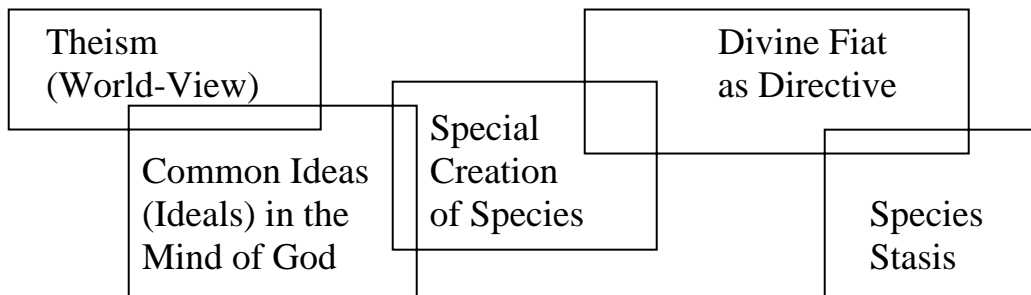


Figure 2. Creation--How to not define a word precisely.

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-

	Transcendence (God acting from outside "natural law")	Immanence (God acting through) {inside} "natural law")
	Origin Intervention	Existence Direction
Biblical (Full Theism)	Cosmos is dependent upon God for all aspects	
Materialism	Cosmos is autonomous from God for all aspects	

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?

tally 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 directly 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.

	Transcendence (God acts from without "natural law")		Immanence (God acts from within "natural law")	
	Origin	Intervention	Existence	Direction
I. Full Theism	D	D	D	D
II. Legal Deism	D	D	D	A
III. Intrusive Deism	D	D	A	A
IV. Full Deism	D	A	A	A
V. Materialism	A	A	A	A

Figure 4. A Classification--Relationship of God to Natural World

A = Universe is autonomous from God in this aspect of its being.

D = Universe is dependent upon God for this aspect of its being.

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

Types of Sources	Dependent Upon God	Autonomous From God
Deterministic: due to environ- mental direction	Providential Selection (I)	Natural Selection (II, III, IV, V)
Deterministic: not due to environmental direction	Providential Creation (I, II)	Directionless Mutation (III, IV, V)
Non-Deterministic causes outside of natural law	Intrusive Creation (I, II, III, IV)	Stochastic Mutation (III, IV, V)

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 | IV. Full Deism |
| II. Legal Deism | V. Materialism |
| III. Intrusive Deism | |

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

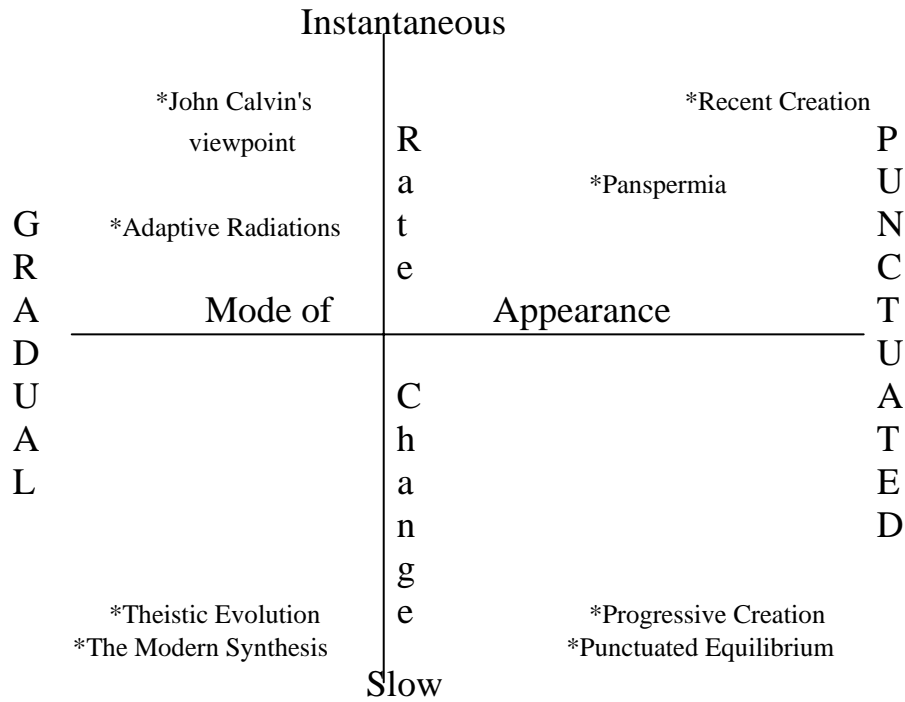


Figure 6. Variation in Scenarios of the Appearance of Novelty
Suggested locations on the co-ordinate system for various viewpoints

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 "platonc 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-reproducible.

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 I: 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."¹ 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

1 John van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975); Thomas L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974).

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.³ 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."⁴ 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."⁵ 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.⁶

THE EXTENT OF PATRIARCHAL NOMADISM

Was Abraham a "nomad"? The Genesis account relates the movements of Abraham primarily in relation to two factors: the

nationales, 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).

3 M. Selman, "Published and Unpublished Fifteenth Century B.C. Cuneiform Documents and Their Bearing on the Patriarchal Narratives of the Old Testament" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wales, 1975) and his article in *The Tyndale Bulletin* 27 (1976), forthcoming.

4 Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, pp. 121-22.

5 Ibid.

6 Donald J. Wiseman, "Israel's Literary Neighbours in the Thirteenth Century B.C.," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 5 (1977), forthcoming.

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 Urfa' 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).

⁸ William W. Hallo, "The Road to Emar," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 18 (1964): 57-88.

⁹ Cyrus H. Gordon, "Abraham and the Merchants of Ura," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 17 (1958): 28-31.

¹⁰ H. W. F. Saggs, "Ur of the Chaldees," *Iraq* 22 (1960): 200-209.

of the land as a token of its take-over.¹¹ 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 southernmost 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.¹²

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

11 Donald J. Wiseman, "They Lived in Tents," *Studia Biblica et Theologica* 7 (1977), forthcoming.

12 M. B. Rowton, "Enclosed Nomadism," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 17 (1974): 1-16.

second millennium B.C. or with the even earlier activities of the Sutu (ca. 2700 B.C.) or Egyptian *ssyw*.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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, Amnanum), which could denote the total group (e.g., Bene-Yamina = "Benjaminites").¹⁵ Nomads and sedentary members of a single tribe linked the former to an urban base as has been suggested for Abraham and Nahur (Aram).¹⁶ The long continuity of this tradition can be illustrated from the traditional genealogies of the second millennium B.C. (Hammurapi);¹⁷ Assyria (King List);¹⁸ and Israel (Abraham

13 R. Giveon, *Les bedouins shosou des documents egyptiens* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971); also references are made to nomads in the Ebla texts.

14 M. B. Rowton, "Autonomy and Nomadism in Western Asia," *Orientalia* 42 (1973): 252.

15 So also Midian, Amalek, and Bene-Qedem, all Midianites (Moshe Anbar, "Changement des noms des tribus nomades dans la relation d'un meme evenement," *Biblica* 49 [1968]: 221-32).

16 A. Malamat, "Aspects of Tribal Society," in *La Civilisation de Mari*, ed. J. R. Kupper (Liege: Bibliotheque de la Faculte de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Universite de Liege, 1967), pp. 129-38.

17 J. J. Finkelstein, "The Genealogy of the Hammurapi Dynasty," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 20 (1966): 95-118; cf. W. G. Lambert, "Another Look at Hammurabi's Ancestors," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 22 (1968): 1-2.

18 F. R. Kraus, *Konige die in Zelten wohnten* (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.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.).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.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,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 *Ara/i/bu* (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."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; Abdi-Erah at Kish; and Yaggid-Lim at Mari.

20 M. Liverani, "The Amorites," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 100-133.

21 H. Cazelles, "The Hebrews," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, p. 23.

22 A. Malamat, "The Aramaeans," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, pp. 134-35.

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.²⁴ 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);²⁵ "transferred, without a stable habitat" (*apr*); "confederates" (*ebru*); "lord" (Hurr. *ewri*);²⁶ 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."²⁷ 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).²⁸

24 J. Weingreen, "Saul and Habiru," *IVth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1967), 1:63-66.

25 G. Posener, "Textes Egyptiens," in *Le probleme des Habiru*, ed. J. Bottero (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1954), p. 166.

26 Cazelles, "The Hebrews," pp. 4-16; F. F. Bruce, in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, ed. D. Winton Thomas (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 12-15.

27 Donald J. Wiseman, *The Word of God for Abraham and Today* (London: Westminster Chapel, 1959), p. 11.

28 M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 90 (1970): 184-203; S. E. Loewenstamm, "The Divine Grants of Land to the Patriarchs," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 91 (1971): 509-10.

While such grants might associate tribes with sedentary groups, Abraham is concerned not with his "nomadism" but with his status as a "(resident-) alien" (*ger*), and a landless one at that (*ger w^etosab*). 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 *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 *ger* in Sodom (19:9), and Jacob is a *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 *de facto* and *de jure* what had been promised by God *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).

²⁹ Manfred R. Lehmann's interpretation of this transaction as Hittite ("Abraham's Purchase of Machpelah and Hittite Law," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 129 [1953]: 15-18) has been questioned by Gene M. Tucker ("The Legal Background of Genesis 23," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85 [1966]: 77-84). However, Tucker's (and van Seters' [*Abraham in History and Tradition*, p. 99]) equation of the literary structure of Genesis 23 with *Zweigesprachsurkunde* (following Herbert Petschow, "Die Neubabylonische Zweigesprachsurkunde und Genesis 23," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 19 [1965]: 103-20, a late neo-Babylonian form) ignores the fact that this type of document occurs also in the earlier (old Babylonian) period (*Bibliotheca Orientalis* 22 [1965]: 171; *Cuneiform Texts in the British Museum* [London: British Museum, 1964], vol. 45, no. 60).

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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 (גר) newly arrived in the land, who took active and public steps to take possession of land granted him by divine covenant-promise.¹ He was in effect taking over "by faith" the area known later as Judah.²

ABRAHAM AS A POLITICAL LEADER

This leads to a study of his ascription as "Abraham the prince" (Gen. 23: 5, AV) or the נשיא, a title given by a group of foreigners living among the Canaanites who also held land rights in the same region *de facto*.³ 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 (נשיא אלהים) 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

1 Donald J. Wiseman, "Abraham the Hebrew," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 134 (January-March 1977):123-30.

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 superlative⁴ or as an acknowledgement of his affiliation to God ("a נִשְׂיָא of God") by men of another religion,⁵ the use of the term נִשְׂיָא 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 David⁷ and Solomon (1 Kings 11:34) as to the chief political authority, comparable to the later "king" (מֶלֶךְ) (Exod. 22:28).

Moreover, the suggestion that the term may well include the idea of official selection by the people⁸ 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

4 D. W. Thomas, "A Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew," *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953):210-19.

5 H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1942), p. 644.

6 E. A. Speiser, "Background and Function of the Biblical Nasi" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963): 111-19.

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.

8 Speiser, "Background and Function of the Biblical Nasi," p. 115.

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).

10 M. Liverani, "The Amorites" in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 124.

11 D. J. Wiseman, *The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon* (London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1958), p. 41, lines 162-68.

12 A. Malamat, "Conquest of Canaan: Israelite Conduct of War according to the Biblical Tradition," in *Encyclopedia Judaica Year Book 1975/6* (1977), p.180.

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 **רַב־עָשִׂיר** 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."¹³ The act of going to Egypt for corn to save life is not of itself classed as a sign of lack of faith.¹⁴ 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" (**אֶחָיו**; 14:14; cf. 13:8), which in the context could be "ally" -- a person in association with Abraham on a covenant basis¹⁵ who had been given, in effect, a preferential

13 *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Abraham," by L. Hicks, 1:17.

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).¹⁶ Any supposed parallel with Hurrian wife-sister marriages¹⁷ is to be rejected.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ However, in view of the strong later tradition that Sarai was faithful to both her husband and his God (Isa. 51:2)²⁰ it may be questioned whether this episode is yet adequately interpreted.²¹ 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.

17 E. A. Speiser, "The Wife-Sister Motif in the Patriarchal Narratives," in *Biblical and Other Studies*, Studies and Texts, vol. 1, ed. Alexander Altmann (Waltham, MA: Advanced Judaic Studies, Brandeis University, 1963), pp. 15-28 (esp. p. 25).

18 C. J. Mullo-Weir, "The Alleged Hurrian Wife-Sister Motif in Genesis," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society* 22 (1967-68), p. 23; and Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, pp. 233-34. Cf. S. Greengus, "Sisterhood Adoption at Nuzi and the 'Wife-Sister' in Genesis," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975):5-31.

19 This was always between members of the same Egyptian royal family. Also treaty marriages involve the daughter of one party.

20 Cf. also Hebrews 11:11 and 1 Peter 3:6.

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).²² 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.²³ The treaty-covenant, customarily envisaged as enduring for the foreseeable future,²⁴ 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 (סרניים).²⁵ 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 damqarim*) of Genesis 23:16.

23 E.g., D. J. Wiseman, *The Alalakh Tablets* (London: British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, 1953), No.2.

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.).

25 John van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 52.

peoples and Palestine in the Middle Bronze Age are attested. Crete (Kaptar, Heb. כַּפְתָּר), which was their place of origin or transit, is mentioned in Egyptian and Marl texts of the early second millennium,²⁶ 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 = Chere-thites) and the Genesis references could well be to "Philistines" used in a confederate sense.²⁷ 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 names²⁸ and to conclude treaties according to formulae and procedures long attested throughout the ancient Near East.²⁹

ABRAHAM AS A GOVERNOR

The status of Abraham can be examined further, for it may not be without significance that Abraham as a leader (אֲבִי) 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.³⁰ His title *sapitum* (Heb. שַׁפֵּט) 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.³¹ 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

26 K. A. Kitchen, "The Philistines," in *Peoples of Old Testament Times*, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 56-57.

27 T. C. Mitchell, "Philistia," in *Archaeology and Old Testament Study*, ed. D. Winton Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), pp. 406-13. A similar situation arises with references to early Ahlamu-Ar(a)maya-Arameans.

28 Kitchen, "The Philistines," p. 72, footnote 24.

29 Compare the treaty between Ebrum of Ebla with Duddiya of Assur ca. 2300 B.C.

30 A. Marzal, "The Provincial Governor at Mari: His Title and Appointment," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 30 (1971):186-217.

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 חניכים 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 (צדקה) and judgment (משפט) 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

32 J. R. Kupper, "Un gouvernement provincial dans le royaume de Mari," *Revue d'Assyriologie* 41 (1947):161.

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.³⁶ The emphasis here is on the administration of the law including customary law (משפט). 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.³⁷

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.³⁸ Also the tenth (מעשר) is often, but not invariably, used of a sacred payment³⁹ and compared with the מכס used of a levy on war spoils (Num. 31:28).⁴⁰ 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

36 D. J. Wiseman, "Law and Order in Old Testament Times," *Vox Evangelica* 8 (1973):5-21.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

38 Psa110:4; Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:10-21.

39 J. A. Emerton, "The Riddle of Genesis XIV," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971): 407; E. Salonen, "Uber den Aehnten im alten Mesopotamien," *Studia Orientalia* 43 (1974):3-65.

40 Cf. the Akkadian *miksu* ("transit-tax") usually exacted by provinces and primarily from merchants (J. N. Postgate, *Taxation and Conscriptio in the Assyrian Empire* [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974], p. 134).

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.

41 *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, s.v. "esirtu," 4:365.

42 Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, pp. 121-22; J. A. Emerton, "Some False Clues in the Study of Genesis XIV," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971):24-47; cf. p. 412.

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.

45 Roland de Vaux, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1972), p. 117.

46 Emerton, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, pp. 431-32.

47 M. C. Astour, "Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis 14 and Its Babylonian Sources," in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 65-112; but for an opposing view see Emerton, *Abraham in History and Tradition*, pp. 38-46.

48 Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1966), p. 45; H. W. F. Saggs, "The Nimrud Letters 1952; Part II: Relations with the West," *Iraq* 17 (1955): 150.

49 D. Wiseman, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon," p. 39, lines 153-54.

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.

50 Cyrus H. Gordon, "Abraham and the Merchants of Ura," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 17 (1958):28-31; but for an opposing view see H. W. F. Saggs, "Ur of the Chaldees," *Iraq* 22 (1960):200.

51 M. Birot, *Lettres de Yaqqim-Addu, gouverneur de Sagaratum*, Archives Royales de Mari XIV (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1974), nos. 19, 31, 97-120.

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SCHOLIA

RECENT TRANSLATIONS OF GENESIS 3:15

MARTEN H. WOULDSTRA

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 *hu'* with *autos*, 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 mariological understanding.

The purpose of the following comparison of translations is primarily to localize the problem-areas which the translator confronts. 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 translations 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*^c, 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^c. - 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 *zera^c* 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 *zera^c* indicate the "offspring," or "brood" of snakes?

The Lexicon informs us that the Old Testament uses *zera^c* 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 *zera^c* 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 *zera^c*? 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 *zera*^c. The Bible nowhere suggests that demons can have offspring in the sense of progeny or posterity. When, nevertheless, the word *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 *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 *zera*^c when applied to the one whom the serpent represented as spokesman.

There is still another use of the word *zera*^c which may have played a role at this point. One definition given by B.D.B. of *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 *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 *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 *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 *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.

Translation Problem Two: How to render the pronoun hu'.--
In the Hebrew text this pronoun refers back to *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^c*. Since *zera^c*, 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^c*, which is in view here. And again, it is the serpent, not his *zera^c* which will "bruise" the heel of the woman's *zera^c*.

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*^c with a plural verb form. Such usage is quite common when it comes to collectives such as *zera*^c. 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 TOLEDOT OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS AND THEIR REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

MARTEN H. WOULDSTRA

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-Stücke"* (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 (*lückenhaft*), 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 Gispén, 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).

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Ancient Ecologies and the Biblical Perspective

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The word "ecology" was first coined in 1873¹ 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.⁸ Throughout the entire area, with few exceptions, rain water was precious and was conserved by cisterns.⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.).¹⁷ 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 1 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.¹⁸

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.¹⁹

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.²⁰ His theory was criticized by E. Wright, who pointed out that pollen samples from northwestern Greece from this period indicated no drought.²¹ 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.²² Whether or not such a drought caused the Mycenaean decline is still a moot point.²³ 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.²⁴

Palestine.²⁵*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."²⁶

*Winds.*²⁷

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).²⁸

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 (*sirocco*, *khamisin*) 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 sirocco 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 siroccos 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 sirocco is experienced in the Transjordan, the Negev, and the Rift Valley. In coastal regions the sirocco 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.*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."³⁹

For the later Babylonians (2nd-1st millennium B.C.) the pre-eminent rain god was the Syrian god Adad (Hadad). In the *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:

Cut off supplies for the peoples,
Let there be a scarcity of plant life to satisfy their hunger.
Adad should withhold his rain,

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.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰

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, . . .⁵¹

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.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,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."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 control 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.⁶⁰

It is man's sinful exploitation of the universe, his contempt 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."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.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."⁶³

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, 20.⁶⁴

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."⁶⁵ 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.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."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.⁶⁸

Christ taught that one should be satisfied with one's "daily bread."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.)⁷⁰

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.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."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.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."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.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 compassion 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 wrongdoings 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?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.⁸¹ 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."⁸² 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."⁸³

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 Sefire 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. . . ."⁸⁴ 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."⁸⁵

There are nine Hebrew words which designate locusts in the Old Testament.⁸⁶ 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).⁸⁷

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).⁸⁸ Locusts belong to the *Acridiidae*

family of "short-horned grasshoppers." Of the 91 species found in Palastine 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.⁸⁹

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).⁹⁰

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.⁹¹

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.⁹⁹ 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."¹⁰⁰

4. Why do natural disasters occur? Are they judgments of God?

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. 1:19-21.¹⁰¹ 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 inoculations 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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mm.); that during the sixty years from 1850 to 1910 it dropped twelve times below the critical 20 inches (500 mm.) " Orni and Efrat, p. 116: "Drought years in Israel are frequent, and often affect the entire country. In 1950/51, for example, only 35% of the annual average fell on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, 43% in Jerusalem, 53% in Haifa, and 65% in Tel-Aviv. Often there are series of drought years, as in the five winters between autumn 1958 and spring 1963." Cf. J. Neumann, "On the Incidence of Dry and Wet Years," *Israel Exploration Journal* 6 (1956), 58-63.

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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."

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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 seabottom 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,⁹² 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, Benoit de Maillet and Richard Kirwan. Benoit de Maillet was the French ambassador to Egypt, well acquainted with Arab culture.⁹³ 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.⁹⁴ 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.⁹⁵ These views were couched within a Cartesian cosmology that favored the eternity of matter. Recognizing that such views would not

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.

⁹⁸ Benoit 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.⁹⁶

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.⁹⁷

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.⁹⁸

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:

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.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Kirwan, "On the Primitive State of the Globe and its Subsequent Catastrophe," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 6 (1797) 233-308.

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.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-

¹⁰⁹ Of particular importance here was the work of James Hutton as spelled out in his *Theory of the Earth* (Edinburgh: Creech, 1795) as well as the discovery that numerous layers of basalt, a rock that neptunists claimed had been precipitated from the ocean, could be traced to several extinct volcanic cones in central France.

mers.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.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."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."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."¹¹⁴ This long period of time between verses one and two was the supposed gap of

¹¹⁰ For the original quotation from Thomas Chalmers, see Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of the Rocks* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1857) 141.

¹¹¹ William Buckland, *Vindiciae geologicae* (Oxford: University Press, 1820).

¹¹² William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology* (London: Wm. Pickering, 1837). Buckland's work is the sixth of the Bridgewater Treatises.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 21.

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.

¹¹⁶ John Pye Smith, *The Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some Parts of Geological Science* (5th ed.; London: H. G. Bohn, 1854).

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*.¹¹⁷ 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.¹¹⁸ 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."¹¹⁹

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."¹²⁰ This series of visions revealed "successive scenes of a great air-drawn panorama."¹²¹ 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 of the day and night, would have arrested most powerfully, during these periods, a human eye."¹²²

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

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.¹²³

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."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.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

123 Ibid., 205-6.

124 Ibid., 176.

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,

¹²⁶ Ibid., 196.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 198.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 200-201.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 201.

was identified with the Permian and Triassic periods geologically.

The fifth day was linked with the Oolitic¹³⁰ 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.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."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 *Creation*.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,"¹³⁴ nonetheless the "antique document" agreed in its statements with the science of his day. In fact the "history of Creation

¹³⁰ The Oolitic was the equivalent of what today is referred to as the Jurassic period (system).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 161.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 162.

¹³³ Arnold Guyot, *Creation* (New York: C. Scribner's, 1884).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

is given in the form of a grand cosmogonic week, with six creative or working days."¹³⁵ The problem for Guyot was to demonstrate the coincidence of the sequence of events outlined 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" (*'eres*) "is an equivalent for matter in general," 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."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."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.¹³⁸

As the great gaseous mass began to move, light developed and the waters were separated. But Gen 1:6-7 was not referring 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 concentrated into stars."¹³⁹ Thus the nebulous masses (galaxies) of outer space were the heavens of heavens, that is, the waters

¹³⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 35-36.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 36.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 38.

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.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 *ex nihilo* creation at the time. They "existed before, and now enter into new relations with the earth."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."¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 89-90.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 92.

¹⁴² Ibid., 93.

Guyot correlated day four with the production of Archean rocks.¹⁴³ On day five, Paleozoic and Mesozoic rocks were deposited 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.¹⁴⁴

One of the major concordistic works of the nineteenth century was *The Origin of the World According to Revelation and Science*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 geology.

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

¹⁴³ The term Archean is typically applied by geologists even today to the oldest known rocks. Such rocks generally underlie other rocks and are typically though not always metamorphic and igneous rocks. Some of the stratified Archean rocks contain fossil remains of primitive one-celled organisms.

¹⁴⁴ See, for example, James Dwight Dana, "Creation, or the Biblical Cosmogony in the Light of Modern Science," *BSac* 42 (1885) 201-24.

¹⁴⁵ J William Dawson, *The Origin of the World according to Revelation and Science* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898).

TABLE II

Correlation Schemes of Major Nineteenth-Century Day-Age Concordists			
	Miller	Guyot	Dawson
Day one	Azoic period, clearing of cloudy atmosphere		Atmosphere clears
Day two	Silurian and Old Red periods, development of atmosphere	Primitive nebula breaks up into gaseous masses and stars	Clouds and oceans segregate
Day three	Carboniferous period, lush vegetation emerge	Earth cools, simple plants only	Eozoic period, continents
Day four	Permian and Triassic periods, final clearing of atmosphere	Archean period (equivalent of Miller's Azoic), sun becomes visible as glowing earth loses its luminosity	Sun condensed, continents resubmerged
Day five	Oolitic and Cretaceous periods, ichthyosaurs, plesiosaurs, birds, pterodactyls	Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras (equivalent of Miller's Silurian through Cretaceous), marine animals and complex vegetation	Paleozoic and Mesozoic eras
Day six	Tertiary land mammals	Tertiary land mammals	Tertiary land mammals

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.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 142.

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."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."¹⁴⁸ The light that appeared on day one "must have proceeded from luminous matter diffused through the whole space of the solar system."¹⁴⁹ This luminous matter was gradually concentrated and "at length all gathered within the earth's orbit"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."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."¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 110.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 117.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 157.

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.¹⁵³

Dawson identified the appearance of vegetation on day three with the Eozoic period¹⁵⁴ (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 *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.¹⁵⁵

On the fourth day the concentration of luminosity in the center of the solar system, that is, the condensation of the

¹⁵³ Ibid., 184-85.

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.

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.¹⁵⁶

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 *Studies in Science and Religion*,¹⁵⁷ 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."¹⁵⁸ 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.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 205.

¹⁵⁷ George Frederick Wright, *Studies in Science and Religion* (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1882).

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 365.

¹⁵⁹ 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*¹⁶⁰ 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."¹⁶¹ 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."¹⁶² 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 surficial gravels, erratic boulders, and broad river valleys dis-

¹⁶⁰ George Frederick Wright, *Scientific Confirmations of Old Testament History* (Oberlin, Ohio: Bibliotheca Sacra, 1906).

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 368.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 370.

tributed widely over northern Europe as the effects of a catastrophic deluge.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."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."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."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.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." 168 But if that had happened,

¹⁶³ See William Buckland, *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.

¹⁶⁴ John Fleming, "The Geological Deluge, as interpreted by Baron Cuvier and Professor Buckland, inconsistent with the testimony of Moses and the Phenomena of Nature," *Edinburgh Philosophical Journal* 14 (1826) 211.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

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."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."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.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 megatheria¹⁷⁴ 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-

¹⁷¹ Miller, *Testimony*, 300-301.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 302.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 302-3.

¹⁷⁴ Megatherium was a gigantic extinct sloth.

stricted 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 atmospherical 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.¹⁷⁷

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."¹⁷⁸ 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.¹⁷⁹ 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.¹⁸⁰ Then in 1977, a sudden flurry of concordist works appeared beginning with my *Creation and the Flood*.¹⁸¹ 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.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.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."¹⁸⁴ I denied that this creation of light had anything to do with the so-called Big Bang hypothesis.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."¹⁸⁶ The problem was that "different categories of plants seem to have arisen over widely-spaced times."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-

¹⁸² Ibid., 116-17.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 119.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 120.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 128.

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.

¹⁹⁰ John L. Wiester, *The Genesis Connection* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1983).

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.

¹⁹⁵ William L. Stokes, *The Genesis Answer* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984).

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."²⁰⁰

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."²⁰¹ 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."²⁰²

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."²⁰³ Moreover, "The theme of Gen 1:9 is clearly the emergence of a solid planet from formerly diffuse, unorganized material."²⁰⁴ 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'.²⁰⁵ 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."²⁰⁶ As the process continued "it is not difficult to visualize the planet emerging from 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."²⁰⁷ 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*²⁰⁸ 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."²⁰⁹ Moreover, the days were "sequential but not consecutive" and "the creative activity largely occurs between days rather than on them."²¹⁰ 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

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 92.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 97.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann, Jr., *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977).

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.”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.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 *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!²¹⁸

Selected interpretations of nineteenth and twentieth century concordists are summarized in Table III. Concordists

²¹⁶ Ibid., 72.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 73.

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 *Faith and Thought* and *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, *The Flood Reconsidered* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970).

TABLE III

Summary of Concordist Interpretations of Key Texts in Genesis

	Gen 1:2	Gen 1:6-8	Gen. 7:11
Kirwan	Global ocean that precipitates chemicals, heating ocean which then vaporizes to thick darkness; Spirit-evaporation	Atmosphere formed by evaporating chemical precipitation	Caverns and ocean
Buckland	Devastated state of world after catastrophe prior to re-creation		Oceanic tides accounting only for surficial gravels
Fleming Miller	Primitive ocean	Development of atmosphere; deposit of Silurian and Old Red rocks	Tranquil flood Depression of central Asia and subsequent flooding
Guyot	Matter in primitive condition; gaseous atmosphere	Primitive nebula breaks up into gaseous masses and stars	
Dawson	Atmospheric water covering earth	Clouds and ocean segregate	Flooding around Caspian Sea
Wright			Depression of earth by glacial ice and flooding of depressions by melting glacial ice
Newman and Eckelmann	Gas cloud that blocks out starlight		
Stokes	Universal unorganized matter and water in space	Opposed spiral arms of galaxy; darkness of second day due to black hole	

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.²¹⁹ James Murphy and Herbert Morris defended the gap theory in their writings.²²⁰ More recently J. O. Buswell, Jr., and Harold Stigers adopted the view that the days of Genesis 1 were periods of time longer than 24 hours.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.

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.²²²

1. *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-

²¹⁹ For a more comprehensive listing of many prominent theologians and exegetes who adopted the day-age theory see my *Christianity and the Age of the Earth*, 55-67.

²²⁰ Herbert W. Morris, *Science and the Bible* (Philadelphia: Ziegler and McCurdy, 1871), and James G. Murphy, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Andover: Draper, 1887).

²²¹ J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., *A Systemic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), and Harold G. Stigers, *A Commentary on Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

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.

pirical 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.²²³ 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.²²⁵

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.²²⁶ 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-

²²⁵ For aspects of the history of geology see, for example, Charles C. Gillispie, *Genesis and Geology* (New York: Harper, 1951), Roy Porter, *The Making of Geology* (Cambridge Press, 1977), Claude C. Albritton, *The Abyss of Time* (San Francisco: Freeman, Cooper, 1980).

²²⁶ The apparent-age theory of creation was adopted in John C. Whitcomb and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962).

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.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.²²⁸

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.

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 Gosse²²⁹ 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

²²⁹ Philip H. Gosse, *Omphalos* (London: J. Van Voorst, 1857).

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.²³⁰ 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

²³⁰ 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 legitimately 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 theologians. 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 biblical 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 between 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

²³¹ See, for example, Meredith G. Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," *WTJ* 20 (1958) 146-157; Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984); Conrad Hyers, *The Meaning of Creation* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1984) 1-114; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology," *EvQ* 46 (1974) 81-102; Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3," *BSac* 132 (1975) 327-342.

²³² Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Wm. Eerdmans, 1972) 53.

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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THE DAYS OF GENESIS

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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 to 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 historie, die geloof en vertrouwen verdient. En daarom hield de Christelijke theologie dan ook, op slechts enkele uitzonderingen na, aan de letterlijke, historische opvatting van het scheppingsverhall vast" (Herman Bavinck: *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Tweede Deel, Kampen, 1928, p. 458).

tion 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.³ The theory has found advocacy recently both by Roman Catholics and by evangelical Protestants.⁴ 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*.⁵ 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, and indem sie der Bibel wie der Naturwissenschaft volles Recht lasst in Bezug auf das jeder eigentümliche 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 original 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 Testament 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.⁶ 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.⁷

Inasmuch as the heaven is of a higher order than the earth it is not subject to a development as is the earth.⁸ 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.⁹

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: "Sammenvattend 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.).

⁶ "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 eschatologische ontwikkeling wordt gegrepen" (*op. cit.*, p. 77).

⁷ "Zoo dikwijls 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 to 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.).

⁸ "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).

⁹ "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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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.¹² 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, wijl 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 **יום השבת** 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 compelled to understand Noordtzij as holding that as far as the days of Genesis are concerned, there was no reality with respect to the divine creative activity.¹³ 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?¹⁴ To the best of the present writer's knowledge no one has ever answered these two considerations of Aalders.

in de H.S. ons de heerlijkheid der schepselen te teekenen 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 Openbaring in de eerste drie Hoofdstukken van Genesis*, Kampen, 1932, p. 233).

¹⁴ "1°, 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 scheppingswerkzaamheid geen waarde zouden hebben: en 2° 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).

II. *Preliminary Remarks About Genesis One*

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".¹⁵ 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".¹⁶

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).¹⁷ Nor can Genesis one really be called a theological reconstruction or interpretation.¹⁸ What then is this first chapter of Genesis? Actually

¹⁵ John L. McKenzie, S.J.: "Myth and the Old Testament", in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. XXI, July 1959, p. 281.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 277. This position is widely held; cf. Young, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2", *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. XXIII, May 1961, pp. 151-178, where references to relevant literature will be found.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 278.

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".¹⁹

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.²⁰

Elsewhere we have sought to demonstrate the untenability of the view that there are mythical elements in the first chapter of the Bible.²¹

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?²² What warrant is there for the

jahrhundertelangem Wachstum sich behutsam angereichert hat". Despite this sentence, it is not clear that the positions of von Rad and McKenzie are essentially different.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 281.

²⁰ K. Popma: "Enkele voorstellen 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 enigmatische 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?

²³ Cf. e. g., W. F. Albright: *From the Stone Age to Christianity*. New York, 1957, p. 399, and a discussion of this view in Young: *Thy Word Is Truth*, Grand Rapids, 1957, pp. 245 ff.

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).²⁴ 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 6:7²⁵ 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.²⁶ That such difficulties

²⁴ Commenting on II Peter 3:5b, Bigg, (*The International Critical Commentary*, New York, 1922, p. 293) remarks, "Ἐξ 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. In Peter the event which he describes as γῆ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ δι' ὕδατος συνεστῶσα was just as historical as that which he relates in the words δι' ὧν ὁ τότε κόσμος ὕδατι κατακλυσθεὶς ἀπώλετο.

²⁵ James Moffatt (*The International Critical Commentary*, New York, 1924, p. 81) thinks that Hebrews 6:7 contains reminiscences of the words of Genesis 1:12.

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.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".²⁸ It would be difficult to state this approach more concisely and accurately. One manifestation thereof maybe found in a recent issue of *Bezinning*, in which the entire number is de-

be more satisfactory, and Lattey's view (i. e., a form of the non-chronological hypothesis) is described as "eminently satisfying" (p. 39).

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 *Bezinning* (loc. cit., especially pp. 16 ff.) is in many respects unsatisfactory and disappointing.

²⁸ John C. Whitcomb, Jr.: *Biblical Inerrancy and the Double Revelation 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".²⁹ 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.³⁰

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.³¹ 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

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 1-57.

³⁰ "Een conflict tussen Genesis en wetenschap kan natuurlijk in ieder geval worden vermeden wanneer men vasthoudt dat de Bijbel geen handboek is voor 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 te doen hebben" (p. 639).

³¹ Cf. Cornelius Van Til: *The Defense of the Faith*, Phila., 1955. Visee (*op. cit.*, p. 641) rightly applies the old and pertinent rule, "Lees wat er staat, en versta wat ge leest".

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".³² 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 *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?"³³ 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?"³⁴

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?"³⁵

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.³⁶ It is certainly true that God did not

³³ "The Meaning of Genesis I", in *Free University Quarterly*, Vol. IV, 1955/1957, p. 222 (hereafter abbreviated *Quarterly*).

³⁴ *Is There A Conflict Between Genesis 1 And Natural Science?*, p. 30 (hereafter abbreviated *Conflict*). Ridderbos gives three examples of "anthropomorphisms".

³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

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 en 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.³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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.³⁹

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".

³⁷ 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).

³⁸ According to Paul, the content of God's speaking ($\delta\ \epsilon\iota\pi\acute{\omega}\nu$) is found in the words $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa\ \sigma\acute{\kappa}\acute{o}\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma\ \phi\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\psi\epsilon\iota$. 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.

³⁹ 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".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,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.

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.

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. Visser, *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 2:5.⁴² 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".⁴³ 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

⁴² Kline: *op. cit.*, pp. 146-157.

⁴³ *Op. Cit.*, p. 150.

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.⁴⁴ 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 **תולדות** in which is obviously derived from **לָדַת**, "to bear", and in the Hiph'il stem with which it is related, the meaning is "to beget". The **תולדות** 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 Schöpfungsbericht ausgeht, sind also sehr verschieden von denen, die uns bei P. begegnet sind and 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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶

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 *תולדות*. 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.⁴⁷ 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 *ni-i5in* 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 *תולדות אלה*? 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?

⁴⁶ Cf. William Henry Green: *The Unity of the Book of Genesis*, New York, 1895, pp. 7-20.

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.⁴⁸

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 to be dogmatic, although the latter alternative has much to commend it.⁴⁹

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 onontslaten 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 hier dem Steppenlande entnommen". הָאָרֶץ , 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,⁵⁰ 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, Göttersloh, 1925, pp. 198-200) is one of the strongest defenders of the view that m 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 h . 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, $\pi\eta\eta\gamma\acute{\eta}$; Aquila, $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\beta\lambda\upsilon\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$; Vulgate, fons; Syriac XXXXX. What really rules out the rendering "rain" or "mist" is the verb h . The causing of the earth to drink is the work of the h 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 Predeuteronomian Primeval", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 58, 1939, p. 102) that the word h 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 h 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 אֲדָמָה 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.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.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 2:5 ff. 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 אֲדָמָה and אֶרֶץ which is found in this section. Whereas אֶרֶץ refers to the earth generally, אֲדָמָה is the ground upon which man dwells. The אֲדָמָה is more restricted in reference than אֶרֶץ, and it is also that ground which produces the sustenance that will sustain the life of אָדָם and which אָדָם must cultivate. Procksch comments, "אָדָם und אֲדָמָה 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 späteren Epoche, sondern sie erzählt unbefangen, dass „Gott Jahve" seine Geschöpfe „formte", d.h. sie mit seinen eigenen Minder 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 טַל that kept rising from the earth.⁵³ 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 יַעֲלֶה must be noted. Delitzsch takes it as indicating a single action "normirt durch den historischen Zusammenh. in Imperfectbedeutung" (*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-chronological 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 \aleph referred to evaporation (and as shown in note 31 this is not possible) it is difficult to understand how it could have provided rainfall 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 \aleph 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.⁵⁶ 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.⁵⁷ 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*'?"⁵⁸ 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

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, jahrhundertelangem 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).

facie meaning is not the true one, it is exegesis alone, and not our independent judgment that the apparent *prima facie* meaning is naive, that will bring us to the truth.

5. The Author of Genesis had a Sublime Concept of God

Somewhat similar is the argument that inasmuch as the author has such a sublime concept of God, we cannot believe that he meant to say that God used a day for each of his great works.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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 וַיִּבְרָא , 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.⁶² 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

⁶² Cf. "The Relation of the First Verse of Genesis One to Verses Two and Three", *Westminster Theological Journal*, Vol. XXI, No. 2 (May 1959), pp. 133-146.

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 (אֲרָצוֹת), 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" (אֵרֶב) 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 אֵרֶב ("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.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ 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

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 (עַל הָאָרֶץ) and are commanded to multiply in the earth (וְהֵעוֹף יִרְבַּ בְּאֶרֶץ). 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.⁶⁶ 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 Schöpfungsbericht*, 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 אָרֶץ and speak of "die Schöpfung der Heere (sabha)" and "die Schöpfung 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:

	RULER	REALM
day four	light-bearers	the earth
day five	sea creatures	seas of earth
	winged fowl	earth
day six	land animals	earth
	man	earth

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.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.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

⁶⁸ *Op. Cit.*, pp. 26 f.

⁶⁹ Cf. W. H. Green: *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.⁷⁰ 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

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.⁷¹
(to be concluded)

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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THE DAYS OF GENESIS SECOND ARTICLE

EDWARD J. YOUNG

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.⁷² 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.⁷³

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 to 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 יוֹם (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 (זָכוֹר) 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 (שִׁבּוּעַ) means "that which is divided into seven", "a besevened thing".⁷⁴ 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 schepsel gezegend heeft."

⁷⁴ שִׁבּוּעַ -- 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 battled like an army, subsided in its on-
slaught.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.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).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 tiara⁷⁸

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.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).

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.

⁷⁷ Here again the seventh day is climactic.

⁷⁸ The text is given in L. King: *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, 2 vols., 1902. Cf. also A. Heidel: *The Babylonian Genesis*, Chicago, 1951, which gives an excellent translation and commentary.

⁷⁹ The texts will be found in Cyrus H. Gordon: *Ugaritic Handbook*, Rome, 1955, and in G. R. Driver: *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, Edinburgh, 1956.

- - - - -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.⁸⁰ 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,⁸¹ 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

⁸⁰ 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.

⁸¹ 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.⁸² 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 **הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ** 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 **יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים** which is intended to identify **יְהוָה**, with the **אֱלֹהִים** of chapter one.⁸³ 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 bruidegomslid to doen hebben met het eerste lied. Maar juist dit om z'n poetische vorm in deze prozaische 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".⁸⁴ 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,⁸⁵ and the scheme may be represented as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1. The divine speech | "And God said" |
| 2. The fiat | "Let there be" |
| 3. The fulfillment | "And there was" or
"and it was so" |
| 4. The judgment | "And God saw that it was good" |
| 5. Conclusion | "And there was evening
and there was morning" |

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-

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 verschrallen 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 וַיְהִי־כֵן.

sistently maintained. Nor can we agree with Deimel that the writer has consistently employed seven different literary elements (the sacred number).⁸⁶ 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.

I	7	6	IV
II	6	6	V
III	5	5	VI
	6	7	

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

⁸⁶ Anton Deimel: *Enuma Elis and Hexaemeron*, Rom, 1934, p. 80. "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 and 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".⁸⁷ 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?"⁸⁸ 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".⁸⁹ 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.

88 H. C. Leupold: *Exposition of Genesis*, Columbus, 1942, p. 52. Cf. also the interesting remark of U. Cassuto (*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Part I, Jerusalem, 1953, p. 14), במציאות האור הם לפני יצירת המאורות אין כמובן, שום קושי שְהרי כל בן אדם יודע שיש אור גם בלי מאורות: אור הברקים למשל.

⁸⁹ John Calvin: *Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, translated by John King, Edinburgh, M.DCCC.XLVII, Vol. I, p. 76.

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 וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי טוֹב

verse 31 וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד

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

⁹⁰ "Endlich ist -list, besonders vor der Trennung von חָשֶׁךְ die allge-
meinste, den Umfang des gesamten Chaos erfüllende Schopfung, die darum
geziemend am Anfang des Schopfungswerks steht" (Procksch; *op. cit.*,
p. 427). "das Licht ist Grundbedingg. aller Ordng. u. alles Lebens"
(Strack: *op. cit.*, p. 1). "ohne Licht kein Leben and keine Ordnung"
(Gunkel: *op. cit.*, p. 103).

⁹¹ "Mit der Reihenfolge Abend-Morgen wird ganz klar gesagt, Bass der
Tag mit dem Morgen beginnt" (Rabast: *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 (*op. cit.*, p. 427), "Die Anschauung des ersten Tages ist
also vom irdischen, 24 stundigen Tag eines Aquinoktiums hergenommen,
wegen v. 11-13 wohl des Frühlingsaquinoktiums, am Morgen beginnend,
am Morgen schliessend".

⁹² Cf. Keil (*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.⁹³ 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.⁹⁴

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.⁹⁵

From this point on, the chapter concerns itself with the

that 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 Schöpfungsbericht 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 "Schöpfung des Himmels".

94 רָקִיעַ, 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 שְׁרָתִים 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 creation of the firmament must have preceded the division between land and earthbound waters; it could not possibly have followed it. The work of day two, therefore, has to be chronologically 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 tremendous 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 indicates 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,⁹⁶ supports the idea of order in the entire creation and yet at the same time emphasizes the individuality of each plant.⁹⁷

Lastly, it must be stressed that the plants and trees did

⁹⁶ The word רָקִיעַ 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 רָקִיעַ . 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 ontwikkelingsreeken van zoogdieren, zoals paard, neushoorn en olifant), maar ook tussen de soorten (overgangen van vis naar amfibie, van amfibie naar reptiel, van reptiel naar vogel en zoogdier)". For one thing to describe the *ontwikkelingsreeken* 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.

⁹⁷ "Es handelt sich hier lediglich um eine Einteilung der Pflanzen, die schon die praktische Verwertbarkeit für Mensch und Tier anzeigt; and diese praktische Einteilung hat zu jeder Zeit ihre Bedeutung" (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,⁹⁸ 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.⁹⁹

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.¹⁰⁰ 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 abhängig sein müssen, 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 Frühling 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 Spoke 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 hangt mit dieser Betonung ihrer Kreaturlichkeit die merkwürdige Trennung von Lichtschöpfung and Erschaffung der Gestirne zusammen. Die Gestirne sind in keiner Weise lichtschöpferisch, sondern durchaus nur Zwischenträger eines Lichtes, das auch ohne sie and vor ihnen da war."

¹⁰² "Im babylonischen Schöpfungsbericht 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 uberragender Bedeutung in ganz friiher and dann wieder in ganz spater 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 (¹¹ 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.¹⁰³ 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

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.

¹⁰³ "Nun ist darüber schon genug gespottet worden, dass hier das Licht vor den Himmelskörpern geschaffen wird. Naturwissenschaftlich ist dies heute kein Problem mehr, denn der Begriff Urstrahlung' besagt genau dasselbe." "Auch wird uns hier keine kindlich naive Auffassung vorgeführt, denn zur Zeit der Aufzeichnung der Genesis wusste wohl auch der Dummste schon, dass das Tageslicht mit der Sonne zusammenhangt" (Rabast: *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 48). And again, "Das Lachen darüber, dass es schon Licht vor der Erschaffung der Sonne gegeben haben muss, gehört einer vergangenen Zeit an, and eine solche Tatsache ist der modernen kosmischen Physik mit ihrer Urstrahlung` kein Problem mehr" (*idem*, p. 69).

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 קָוַה , 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 (אֵל) 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;¹⁰⁴ 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.¹⁰⁵ 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 Hälfte des Chaos einnehmen, zugleich aber zeitlich indem Tag and Nacht entsteht" (Procksch: *op. cit.*, p. 427).

¹⁰⁵ קָוַה 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 between 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 statement is apparent. There are now to be produced those creatures which are animate and which move about. Moses uses the verb **בָּרָא** to designate the creation of three varieties of creatures, namely, the great sea monsters, every living thing that moves about and every winged fowl.¹⁰⁶ 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 **בָּרָא** v. 21 (cf. v. 27) dafür gebraucht wie v. 1, weil das Leben gegenüber der leblosen Schöpfung etwas spezifisch Neues ist, aus ihren Stoffen and Kräften unableitbar" (Procksch: *op. cit.*, p. 430). There is no evidence to support Procksch's statement, "der Begriff **בָּרָא** entspricht der Theologie von P, der Begriff wsm einer altertumlichen, von P wohl übernommenen Naturphilosophie, nach der, Mutter Erde' alles Lebendige auf ihr gebiert (cf. *ψ* 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 **עָשָׂה** and not **בָּרָא**. With **בָּרָא** (in verse 21) there had followed an accompanying blessing (verse 22), and likewise in the second work of the sixth day a blessing accompanies **בָּרָא**. Here there is no blessing, and hence; **עָשָׂה** 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.¹⁰⁷ 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 Gottessprüchen." "Andererseits 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.¹⁰⁸ 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.¹⁰⁹

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

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Young: "Genesis One And Natural Science", in *Torch and Trumpet*, Vol. VII, No. 4 (September 1957), pp. 16 f.

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.¹¹⁰ 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?¹¹¹ 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".¹¹²

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 Polarität: Nichts-Geschaffenes als vielmehr zwischen der Polarität: Chaos-Kosmos" (*op. cit.*, p. 39).

¹¹¹ *Conflict*, p. 29.

¹¹² Cf. the letter of Robert Ericson in *Christianity Today*, Vol. VI, No. 1, (Oct. 13, 1961), p. 44.

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".¹¹⁵

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.¹¹⁶ 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.

¹¹⁵ ed. Alleman and Flack: *Old Testament Commentary*, Philadelphia, 1948, p. 135.

¹¹⁶ "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).¹¹⁷

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.¹¹⁸

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 (werkdagen 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 יום ("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 יום 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.¹¹⁹ It goes without saying that an historical narrative may contain figurative elements. Their presence, however, can only be determined by means of exegesis.

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 to meten, evenmin als bijvoorbeeld bet duizendjarig rijk.' Wie dus vraagt naar de tijdsduur van bijvoorbeeld de scheppingsdagen voor de vierde 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 **עֶרֶב בֶּקֶר** ויהי ערב ויהי בקר berufen (vgl. **עֶרֶב בֶּקֶר** Dan. 8, 14 Abend=Morgen=Tag), aber verlieren denn these Tage die Wahrheit ihres Wesens, wenn der Wechsel von Licht and Dunkel, nach welchem sich ihr Anfang and Ende bestimmt, nach anderen als irdischen zeitlangen gemessen ist and nach andern Gesetzen, als den nun innerhalb unseres Sonnensystems naturgemassen, erfolgt?" (Delitzsch: *Commentar uber 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.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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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" (*Lucerna*, p. 639).

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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 bare 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.¹

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:

Year		Event
0		Jacob and Esau born
40		Esau marries 2 Hittite wives
57	Fourteen years service for his wives	Jacob goes to Haran
58		Esau marries Ishmael's daughter
63		Ishmael dies at 137 years. of age
64		Jacob marries Leah and Rachel
65		Reuben born
66		Simeon born
67		Levi born
69		Dan born
71		Naphtali born
72		Gad born
74	Asher born	
78	Twenty years service as a friend	Reuben, at 13, finds mandrakes
79		Issachar born
81		Zebulun. (82, Dinah)
86		Judah marries Shuah at 18
87		Er born (88, Onan; 89, Shelah)
91		Joseph born of Rachel

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Year	Event
91-97	Six years of service for the cattle
97	Jacob comes from Haran to Succoth (Dinah defiled)
98	Benjamin born, Rachel dies
105	Tamar married to Er (106 to
108	Joseph (17) sold into Egypt
109	Shelah at 20 not given to Tamar
110	Pharez and Zaran born of Tamar
120	Isaac dies (180)
121	Joseph (30) made governor of Egypt
123	Beriah, 20, marries
125	Heber (127, Malchiel) born to Beriah
128	Pharez at 18 marries
129	Hezron (130), Hamul) born to Pharez
130	Benjamin at 32 has 10 sons, and Jacob goes to Egypt
147	Jacob dies ³

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."⁴

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:

Year ⁵	Name of Child	Wife or Handmaid of Jacob
1	Reuben	Leah
2	Simeon	Leah
3	Levi	Leah
4	Dan	Bilhah
4	Judah	Leah
5	Naphtali	Bilhah
6	Gad	Zilpah
7	Asher	Zilpah
8	Issachar	Leah
9	Zebulun	Leah
10	Dinah	Leah
11	Joseph	Rachel

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."⁶

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.

Year ⁷	Month	Name of Child	Wife or Handmaid of Jacob
1	9	Reuben	Leah
2	7	Simeon	Leah
3	5	Levi	Leah
3	8	Dan	Bilhah
4 ⁸	3	Judah	Leah
4	7	Naphtali	Bilhah
5	9	Gad	Zilpah
6	10	Asher	Zilpah
6	12	Issachar	Leah
7	9	Zebulun	Leah
7	11	Joseph	Rachel
9	6	Dinah	Leah

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

Year	Event
0	Jacob and Esau born
40	Esau marries 2 Hittite wives
63	Ishmael dies, age 137
77	Jacob goes to Haran
84	Jacob marries Leah and
84	Reuben born
85	Simeon born
86	Levi born
86	Dan born
87	Judah born
87	Naphtali born

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Year	Event
88	Gad born
89	Asher born
89	Issachar born
90	Zebulun born
90	Dinah born
96	Joseph born
97	Jacob returns to Haran
98	Jacob dwells at Succoth
99	Jacob comes to Shechem and continues 8 yrs.
101	Judah marries Shuah's daughter
102	Er born (103, Onan; 104, Shelah)
106	Shechemites destroyed by Levi and Simeon
107	Benjamin. born, Rachel dies
108	Joseph sold at 17
111	Tamar married to Er
114	Tamar's incest
115	Pharez and Zaran born to Judah
120	Isaac dies at 180
121	Joseph made governor in Egypt
130	Jacob goes to Egypt
147	Jacob dies

Arrangement of Births

Year ⁹	Month	Name of Child	Wife or Handmaid of Jacob
1	9	Reuben	Leah
2	7	Simeon	Leah
3	5	Levi	Leah
3	6	Dan	Bilhah
4 ¹⁰	3	Judah	Leah
4	5	Naphtali	Bilhah
5	3	Gad	Zilpah
6	1	Asher	Zilpah
6	3	Issachar	Leah
7	1	Zebulun	Leah
7	11	Dinah	Leah
7	12	Joseph	Rachel

DOCUMENTATION

1. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (New York: 1850) Vol. I, p. 210.
2. John Rea, "The Historical Setting of the Exodus and the Conquest," Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1956, p. 82.
3. Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary* (New York: Lane and Scott. 1850) Vol. I, p. 211.
4. A. Dillmann, *Genesis* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897). p. 245.
5. Calculation begins from the first year of Jacob's marriage to Leah.
6. C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Pentateuch* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1885). p. 311.
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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