

Analyzing the Genesis Creation Account

By Rev. Phillip David Mosher

***“I believe in God the Father, Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.”***

“So reads the first statement of the Apostles' Creed. This declaration basically restates the first verse of the Bible, and it is universally accepted by Christians.”¹

If that were all we had, this would be an easy task. Why spend so much time and paper on this subject? I have dedicated years to this; and it has not been to refute science but to strengthen my faith and understanding of the Holy Scriptures so I am better prepared to answer those who would question God's Word. If I have learned something, I want to pass it on in the hope that it will help the Bible based believer in understanding what the Scriptures teach so that he/she will be able to stand firm in the faith in times of opposition and will be better equipped to present biblical truth clearly to others.

Sharing a brief background, as a new Christian I was raised on the original *Scofield* and *Pilgrim* Bibles. They nourished me as a newly dedicated Christian. Those study Bibles presented the Gap Theory. Following that model, no one knows the actual age of the universe. According to the Gap Theory, the world had been destroyed and those six days are re-creation days, 24-hour days with no spaces between them. While in college in Phoenix, I joined the Creation Research Society which held strongly to the belief that the Bible presents a young earth and all that we see in the geological records was caused by the deluge of Noah's day. I was a faithful reader of their books and magazines, which were destroyed by mildew in Brazil. Though their materials had an impact on my teaching of Genesis one, I never became a firm believer in a young earth; and during those years, I still saw value in the Gap Theory as presented in my old *Scofield* Bible.

An open mind and a willingness to read other interpretations and books by Christians presenting different scientific materials have moderated my original understanding of the creation account in Genesis. I thank the Lord for Dallas Cain,² a long-time friend, who gave me *God's Time-Records in Ancient Sediments*, by Dan Wonderly. The facts presented in that book are irrefutable, and it was then that I became convinced that the universe and our planet are very old. These evidences took me back to a belief closer to what I had originally believed from *Scofield*. Over the years it has been Dallas who has

¹ The 2 opening paragraphs are quoted from a paper by Perry G. Phillips entitled: *Are The Days Of Genesis Longer Than 24 Hours? The Bible Says, "Yes!"* @ <http://www.ibri.org/> .

² Dallas Cain was an engineer with General Electric. He was in charge of the youth program during the early years of the East Glenville Community Church in Scotia, NY. My wife, Ruth, lived in Scotia and attended Bible classes taught by Dallas at a friend's house and participated in the youth programs. Dallas was a major influence in Ruth's salvation and has continued to be a friend and influence.

pushed me hard enough to cause me to listen to others, to seek out and analyze the facts, and to continue learning.

Over the years I have taught a simple hermeneutical principle: *When the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense*. There are areas in the creation account as recorded in our English translations of Genesis that have not made “plain sense”, at least to me; and I’m confident many other sincere Christians have felt the same. This has driven me to seek answers.

Does Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 make plain sense? Non-Christian, often atheistic scientists and college professors have turned against the Bible because of the six days as they appear in the text with the evening and morning stamp, making them 24 hours each, plus the fact that there are preachers who declare: “Scientists are distorting the facts because they do not believe the Bible. God created in six literal days; the Bible teaches it; and I believe it.” They also hear some who claim they are Bible believing Christians saying: “The world is young. God created with the appearance of age.” Scientists have a very difficult time believing or accepting a story that maintains that the world is young and that God did all of this in 144 hours. Theirs is not a denial of the power of God; but as they contemplate the data presented in *God’s Book of Works*,³ the evidences they see disagree with the young earth belief system. If the Bible really teaches that the Creation took God 144 hours, something is amiss. Seeing this chasm between interpretations, my objective has been to obtain solutions, as much as that is possible.

As part of our in-depth look and presentation of the fields of opinions, I list the problems and conflicts that seem to appear from a pure linear reading of the text:

- 1) There is disagreement over the placement of verses one and two. Some believe those two verses are part of day one. Others believe those verses are an introductory summary to the creation narrative and that the first day starts with verse 3, the position presented in the Scofield Bible. Where do those first two verses belong? If they belong to day one, a linear reading and interpretation would cause one to conclude that the luminaries were created on day four. This approach could explain why the church for centuries believed that the earth was first created and was in the center of all other objects in the universe and rejected the heliocentric teachings of some philosophers and Copernicus and Galileo.⁴
- 2) On day one it says that God called forth light.⁵ On the fourth day it says that God “made”⁵ the luminaries. Some, like me, believe the sun, moon, and stars were created

³ This term is explained as we progress. Briefly it is the creative works of God.

⁴ From Wikipedia: Galileo (Galilei) 15 February 1564– 8 January 1642, commonly known as **Galileo**, was an Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher who played a major role in the Scientific Revolution. His achievements include improvements to the telescope and consequent astronomical observations, and support for Copernicanism. Galileo has been called the "father of modern observational astronomy", the "father of modern physics", the "father of science", and "the Father of Modern Science". Though first rejected by both Catholic and Protestant, the father of modern science, Galileo caused the church to open its eyes to what *God’s Book of Works* was saying, explained later.

⁵ The verb to create (בָּרָא, *bara*, something that only God does) is not used here.

in “the beginning,” before the day one account, and that leading up to or on day one God, through His acts of creation, had cleaned the atmosphere sufficiently so the light from them could reach the earth’s surface, making day and night distinguishable. Others would interpret the text to say that Planet Earth was “created” first, kind of like the theological view of the church before Copernicus and Galileo broke with that tradition, and that the luminaries were “made”⁵ on the fourth day.

- 3) As important as it is to our planet and life thereon, there is no mention of the creation of plant-life in the seas (waters).
- 4) On the third day, God called forth land and vegetation thereon. This seems odd, since the plants would need sunlight to live, assuming that the sun had not been created until day four. Why didn’t God first make the luminaries and the plant-life thereafter? When He brought forth the land from below the seas (verse 2 tells us that the earth was covered with water), it would have been saturated with salty water. The land would need to dry out before plants could thrive on it. Top soil contains dead matter, so necessary for plants, especially food plants. Normally, this top soil with dead matter would take hundreds of years, probably thousands, to develop. How can this all transpire within one 24-hour day? Did God create top soil containing dead matter?
- 5) On the sixth day God creates man. Chapter two expands on that activity. It tells us that man was alone. While still a bachelor, he was given the assignments of caring for the garden and for naming all of the animals. Did that responsibility include all the hundreds of thousands of them? God saw that man needed a helpmate and caused Adam to sleep while a part of his body was used in the forming of a helpmate for him. The Creator gave Eve to Adam, who was very pleased. How could all of this happen in one 24-hour day?
- 6) Small animals and plants are not in the narrative. In the original text the passages say nothing about the creation of microscopic plants and animals, insects, or the smaller animals both in the water and on the land. The animals and fish mentioned in the Hebrew text are those that would have been known to the Israelites, nothing foreign to their experience and understanding is mentioned in these verses.
- 7) The seventh day has no time marker—evening and morning. If these are seven 24-hour days in sequence, why is that time marker missing from the seventh, the Sabbath rest? Some interpreters cite this as evidence that the other six days are longer than 24 hours.

In this chapter I’m discussing the creation account of Genesis chapter 1. Genesis 2:5 seems to present a problem; see footnote.⁶

⁶ Genesis 2:5 “Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.” The following is quoted from Allen MacRay in *The Scientific Approach to the Old Testament*, in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 1953: “Genesis 1 describes the creation of living organisms in the following order: first grass, herbs, and trees (verse 11); then fish and birds (verses 20–21); next beasts of the field, cattle, and creeping things (verses 24–25); finally, man and woman (verses 26–27). Critical writers declare that Genesis 2 sharply contradicts this order. Thus, on page 8 of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, Driver asserts that the order of creation in chapter 2 is as follows: first, Man (verse 7); second, Vegetation (verse 9); third, Animals (verse 19); fourth, Woman (verses 21f). On the same page 51 of the commentary

Though I believe that our all-powerful God can do all His will desires and as quickly as He pleases, through reading and studying the Word and personally walking with our Lord for most of my life,⁷ I have become convinced that God is never in a rush. He is patient and long suffering. Why would the eternal God have any need to be in a hurry? Didn't Peter say that for Him a thousand years is like a day? Over 1,900 years ago Jesus said to the Apostle John, "I am coming quickly" (Revelation 22:20). We humans think that 1,900 years is a long time. With God it is nothing. Time means nothing to Him. The Creator is outside of space and time.

Some will say I lack faith, that I do not believe the Bible or in the almighty powers of God—*nonsense*. I strongly believe that true faith is not a blind leap. God uses words like "seek" and "search" to appeal to us to use our eyes, ears, and brains to analyze the evidences in our growth in the discovery of truth. This is the call made in the book of Proverbs, for us to seek truth from *God's Book of Works*. "Buy truth and do not sell it, get wisdom [skills] and instruction and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). Doing so, Proverbs declares, will greatly benefit the seeker of wisdom (skills). Coming to Jesus as our Savior should be done in an intelligent way. As the evidences are weighed, we learn and become convinced that His claims are true, that He is the Son of God who takes away our sins; and we appropriate God's forgiveness and salvation through intelligent faith—not blind faith. I am among those who look at Genesis one in the same light. If one will be honest, he will confess that the straight-through-linear-reading and the ensuing interpretation presents problems. Plus, it seems to conflict with what honest scientists are finding and telling us. By this, I am not defending scientists; but I am recognizing that *God's Book of Works* reveals truth. That's Scriptural (Psalm 19). I believe that the creation account in Genesis is divinely inspired and accurate. To satisfy my hunger on the intelligence side of my faith, this paper presents the fruit of my honest search for understanding and the answers that have helped me.

Though Christians agree with the truth that God created the universe and all life, there is much disagreement on the element of time and on details in the interpretation of the creative acts and those days in Genesis. Though there are people like me who will say "I don't know," preferring to not make this an issue, there are a few, usually those believing the Bible teaches that we live on a young earth, who will make how one interprets the Genesis creation account a point of fellowship. These people will go so far as to question the salvation status of those not believing as they.⁸

on Genesis quoted above Skinner describes the order in chapter 2 as: 'Man (verse 7), Trees (verse 9), Animals (verses 18–20), Woman (verses 21–23).' The slight difference between these two critics becomes still greater when we note that Driver's commentary on Genesis (Westminster Commentary series), page 35, gives the order as follows: 'the creation of man (verse 7), then follows that of beasts and birds (verse 19), and lastly that of woman (verses 21f; obviously a different order from that of ch. 1.'"

⁷ At this time of writing, the author is 73, was saved at 12, and started growing in Christ at 19.

⁸ In this camp are Mark Van Bebber and Paul Taylor, who wrote *Creation and Time*, Eden Productions, © 1994,

The interpretations of the first chapter of Genesis can be categorized into four distinctively different conclusions about what Moses wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

- 1) **The Young–earth Theory** — teaches that God created everything in six literal days, in 144 hours. Those of this school also believe the earth is 6,000 to 10,000 years old.⁹ According to this belief, time is a very important issue in the interpretation of the creation account in Genesis.
- 2) **The Day–age Theory** — teaches that the six creation days in Genesis one represent long periods of time and that “day” (יִום *yôm*) has been used in a figurative sense.¹⁰ A variation on this is the belief that the first six days are fiat days with long periods of time between them. According to this belief, time is not in focus in the creation account of Genesis.
- 3) **The Framework Theory**¹¹ — believes that the six days are merely a literary tapestry or tool that incorporates the work-week followed by the Sabbath as presented in the Torah, creating a literary frame to hold the eight creative acts (“let” commands). Those of this school usually look at the six days as being 24 hours each woven into the tapestry of the overall account. According to this belief, time is not in focus in the creation account of Genesis.
- 4) **The Gap Theory** — teaches that according to Genesis 1:1-2 God created the universe and life on earth but it was destroyed because of the fall of Satan and became without form and void; and the six days are re-creation days in which God restored the earth and created man. According to this belief, time is not an important issue in the creation account of Genesis.

One can find dedicated supporters and equally strong critics of each position. I collect doctrinal statements and so far have found none that make this a distinguishing issue, though I know some do. Most will make a declaration on what the Bible teaches about the creation of man; but as to the interpretations of the creation account in Genesis chapter one, few make time and age a distinguishing factor in a doctrinal declaration.

For those holding to the Young–earth Theory, in their position time has been elevated to a very important level. Young-earthers hold strongly to a rigid, linear interpretation. They

⁹ Henry M. Morris, in *The Genesis Record*, © 1976, on page 45-46 has stated, “Consequently, the account of earth history as recorded in Genesis fixes the creation of the universe at several thousand, rather than several billion, years ago. The exact date may be as long as 10,000 B.C., or as recently as 4,000 B.C., with the probability (from Biblical considerations, at least) favoring the lower end of this spectrum.”

¹⁰ “The use of ‘evening’ and ‘morning’ may be held to limit ‘day’ to the solar day; but the frequent parabolic use of natural phenomena may warrant the conclusion that it simply means that each creation day was a period of time marked off by a beginning and ending (compare Ps. 90:6). In any event the sun did not become a measure of time before the fourth day, as seen in vv. 14-18.” Quoted from *The Scofield Study Bible III*, © 2006 with the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, p. 3.

¹¹ Set forth in 1924, this view is attributed to Arie Noordziji. In the journal of the *Detroit Baptist Seminary*, Journal 10, © 2005, in a 2 part article by Dr. Robert V. McCabe, *A Critique of The Framework Interpretation of The Creation Account*, McCabe does well at presenting this view to discredit it. I cannot agree with his overall conclusions.

reject what most earth scientists' have concluded from their study of *God's Book of Works*. They believe strongly that the Flood at the time of Noah caused most, if not all of the strata and a lot of what geologists have discovered and presented as evidence for age. Things that cannot be blamed on the Flood are explained by saying that God created the world and universe with the "appearance of age." They surmise that since Adam was created as an adult, then trees were created with rings and the light from a star, perhaps a billion light-years away, was created along with the star, so that immediately it could be seen on earth. (See footnote #13.)

The proponents of positions two, three, and four accept the premise from the earth sciences that the earth is very old, though their interpretations of the Genesis text and their conclusions differ. The fourth, the Gap Theory, was presented in the notes of the earlier editions of the *Scofield* and *Pilgrim* Bibles. Though Dr. Cyrus I. Scofield and the consulting editors of the *Scofield Reference Bible*¹² were some of the top conservative teachers and theologians of that day, among biblical scholars today, supporters of the Gap Theory are few. This view teaches that God created a perfect world that was destroyed when Satan fell, causing it to become without form and void—the gap—and that Genesis 1:3-2:3 describes a restoration process. The Gap Theory is older than the teachings of Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin, so it is wrong to say it came into being in an effort to compromise the creation account with what scientists were presenting. All of these three positions would look at Genesis 1:1-2 as an opening statement and not part of the day one paragraph; and the proponents would accept a less linear approach in interpretation.

It is my contention that once one fully understands the first position and the staggering implications it brings to the table,¹³ including its interpretation of the biblical text and where that leads those proponents, he will conclude that the young-earth position requires much more blind faith than do the other three theories. Those holding to the young-earth position believe that a literal hermeneutics dictates their conclusion: That the days in Genesis chapter one are 24 hours each and that they follow each other forming a seven day week of 168 hours, that God created the universe and Planet Earth in six 24-hour days, and that man is 6,000 years old, obtained primarily from the genealogical records in the Bible. Allowing for the possibility of scribal errors in copying, they will permit the stretching of that time to 7,000 years but no more than 10,000.¹⁴ To further support their interpretation and belief system, they cite the reason statement in the Sabbath Commandment in Exodus 20:11:

¹² First copyright was 1909, second edition 1917: C. I. Scofield, Henry G. Weston, James M. Gray, William J. Erdman, Arthur T. Pierson; W. G. Moorehead, Elmore Harris, Arno C. Gaebelein, & William L. Pettingill

¹³ That is to say that God created the universe with the "appearance of age". A belief that holds that God created this planet with the layers of strata that are apparent everywhere and the various fossils found within them, making Him the author of that dead matter as exists in top soil, limestone, layers of strata, etc. and that God created the light streams from distant stars. This view also blames the movement of the continents and the forming of the high mountains on the Genesis flood, things science attributes to plate tectonics and many millions of years.

¹⁴ See footnote # 9 above.

“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”¹⁵

From this passage the young-earth promoters conclude that the universe and earth are young and science is wrong. I will have to agree that a simple reading of this verse by a twenty-first century American does *seem* to indicate a young universe; but as shall be pointed out, a deeper and carefully thought through approach that removes centuries of bias and looks at many evidences both internal and external will show that the Bible does not agree with the conclusions of the young–earthers.¹⁶ (See also footnote # 15.)

The church was very literal in its interpretation and understanding of passages like Job 38:4-6, Psalm 75:3, 104:5, Daniel 4:10-11, and Matthew 4:8 and excommunicated Copernicus and Galileo and forbid their writings. Because the science of those men has now been accepted as true, even acknowledged by the church though some 200 years later, *we approach and interpret these passages differently today*. This is only one example of a need to move carefully when interpreting and expounding Genesis one.

Because the sciences of geology, oceanology, and astronomy all see a very old earth and universe, to get around this, those promoting a young–earth as biblical will say that “God created the world with the appearance of age.” In other words, God created: the coal beds, some with whole tree remains in them, the star that is 3 billion light-years away with a full light stream to earth all at the same time, thousands of feet of strata with fossils in it, Mount Everest with sea-floor on top and within the limestone¹⁷ are fossilized fish, etc. This statement (creating the world with the appearance of age) places God on the level of the

¹⁵ It is not within the scope of this paper to give a detailed refutation of this interpretation which violates sound hermeneutics and exegesis, by concluding from these verses that God created the universe, Planet Earth, all plant life, all animal life, and human life in six, 24-hour days with a Sabbath on day seven, which would also have to be a 24-hour day. In order of writing, what came first, this commandment or Genesis 1? The passage in Exodus is part of the Sinai covenant. It preceded the writing of Genesis by Moses. It must be pointed out that the seventh “day” cannot be a 24-hour day but is quite long—Jesus was and we still are in that day. I will admit that the passage seems to present a problem, but my major response is that this statement in the Sabbath commandment is not a theological declaration about creation but is using the creation story known to the Israelites in some form to illustrate the need for man to have a day on which he ceases from his work and dedicates time for meditation on the things of God. The Creator did not rest—Jesus said “My Father works and I work until now.” God ceased from creating (backed by fine Hebrew scholarship), but He has never stopped working. Is Exodus telling us to do as God, to cease from inventing and to keep on working? That is where the hermeneutics of the young-earthers naturally would lead one. Since the seventh day has no time stamp, “evening and morning,” with ample evidences proving it to be very long (6,000 or more years), on this and various points the young-earthers’ interpretation fails the test. A good article has been written on the subject by Perry G. Phillips, “Are The Days Of Genesis Longer Than 24 Hours? The Bible Says, ‘YES!’” Phillips presents very valid arguments. Upon request, this author can provide a copy.

¹⁶ The seventh “day” cannot be a 24-hour day but is quite long—Jesus was and we still are in that day. My major response is that this statement in the Sabbath commandment is not a theological declaration about creation but that Moses is using the creation story to illustrate the need for man to have a day of rest and meditation.

¹⁷ Limestone is sedimentary rock, calcium carbonate (CaCO₃).

students who created the Piltdown man, a massive deception that went unexposed for some 49 years. *God is no deceiver*, creating things so they look older than they really are. He did not make a young earth to look very old, causing seekers of truth to come to false conclusions. Have the young–earthers interpreted the Bible and the scientific data correctly? I believe they have not.

The dogmatism of the proponents of the young–earth position has caused a major divide between Christians and between Christianity and Science, turning many scientists against Christianity and the Bible. Dr. Daniel Wonderly has correctly observed:

. . . the frequent rejection by Christians of research data (items of evidence) regarding the geologic formations and strata of the earth is both unnecessary and harmful. We say *harmful* because Christians cannot have a good witness and influence in the presence of unbelievers or of our nation’s educators if they deny obvious realities regarding God’s created world.¹⁸ [emphasis his]

The first question to answer must be: “*Is our earth and the universe old?*” What is the recorded data telling us? Then we will look at the Scriptures. Do they really teach that the earth is young in contradiction of the scientific data? Though much study, hard work, and a willingness to learn are essential in our quest, truth can be found. God rewards the honest seeker.

Are We Overlooking Some Very Important Data?

² The heavens declare the glory of God, the dome of the sky speaks the work of his hands. ³ Every day it utters speech, every night it reveals knowledge. ⁴ Without speech, without a word, without their voices being heard, ⁵ their line goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world. (Psalm 19:2–5 CJB¹⁹, This passage is quoted in Rom. 10:18²⁰)

God has inspired two books. It is absolutely essential to grasp and to clearly understand the truth that God has given man two revelations of Himself—not just one. For good reason, Christians see the Bible as their only rule for faith and practice. Yes, the Bible is very important. God’s revelation to us with written words tells us of His love, mercy, forgiveness, and future blessings upon those who seek God, believe Him, and obey Him. Without the Holy Scriptures, we would be hard pressed to understand the depths of our sin and disobedience and the heights of God’s love and redemptive work on behalf of mankind. But, I believe that Christians are making a serious mistake by

¹⁸ Wonderly, Daniel E., *The Date of Creation: Bible-Compatible Evidences for Great Age*, a paper © 2002

¹⁹ Quoted from the *Complete Jewish Bible* (CJB), translation by David H. Stern © 1998, Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc.

²⁰ “But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; ‘THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.’” (Romans 10:18)

seemingly pushing aside and overlooking an important source of truth: *The creative works of God—His Book of Works*.

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18–20)

God created the universe, planet earth, and life on that planet. This includes His creation of man in the Creator's image and His inscribing upon the human heart the moral law along with a deep inner knowledge that there is a God to whom he is accountable. As Psalm 19 states, nature and God's creative works are speaking, "their line ²¹ goes out through all the earth." These created things reveal God, many truths about Him, and His moral requirements of man. Let's note carefully what Paul has declared: The very things God has created speak to the human soul. Not only does man's conscience reveal to him God's moral requirements and his accountability to the Creator, but the things that God created reveal much more: the Creator's "invisible attributes" and His "eternal power and nature." The truths about God are revealed from within man—written upon the soul so they can be heard, and from without—written in nature so they can be seen. Our Lord, through the Apostle Paul, states that these revelations speak so loudly and clearly to the conscience of man that those who suppress and ignore them will stand before their Creator without any form of excuse for not hearing, seeing, seeking, learning, and following the divine revelations that are speaking loudly and clearly to man's soul and conscience. Following in the steps of Dallas Cain,²² I will call the revelation of God through His creation: *God's Book of Works*.

God's Book of Works does not lie! It is just as reliable at revealing truth as is *God's Book of Words*, written with ink on parchment. For at least 2,500 years *God's Book of Works* was the only revelation of God available to man from which he could learn of God and follow Him and His standards; and all humanity was accountable to God for interpreting and following its teaching with fear and trembling, before the Creator who inspired that book and has made man accountable for reading and properly gaining truth from it. In *God's Book of Words*, the Bible, the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of

²¹ A line used in measuring real estate, thus this "line" is a standard. God's standards are revealed in nature. Used in Isaiah 28:10-13 (NASB) "For *He says*, 'Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there.'" Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary," And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen. So the word of the LORD to them will be, "Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there," That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared and taken captive.

²² Cain, Dallas E., *And It Was So, The Genesis Creation Riddle*, a lengthy paper © 2002

Songs are almost one hundred percent produced from the study of the Creator's revelation of Himself through *God's Book of Works*.

Man was told to rule over and to subdue his environment (Gen. 1:26-28). To be a good steward of our Heavenly Father, we are responsible to study both books: *God's Book of Works* and *God's Book of Words*. Christians desire for all to study the Scriptures, *God's Book of Words*; and yet Christianity has been guilty of neglecting a very important book—one equally inspired by God—a book He has ordered us to study so that we may be blessed (benefited) thereby (Gen. 1:26—28, and the book of Proverbs). We cannot dominate and use wisely to our advantage what God has created without carefully studying *God's Book of Works*.

In many areas God did not give man even a hint as to how to dominate and subdue his environment. For example, the Bible does not tell us how to tame the cow and be blessed from that discipline. Man had to study, experiment, and work with cattle; and by doing so, his life has been blessed (benefited). Not only does he have meat and milk to satisfy his hunger, he has learned how to make leather, cheese, glue, gelatin, etc. The truths man has obtained through his learning about and gaining dominion over his environment through studying *God's Book of Works* have been a tremendous advantage to human kind.

Since both books are the creation of God, then *both are reliable revealers of truths*. I cannot overly emphasize that point. Having one author, who is perfect in all that He does, these two books MUST be in agreement; and they are! I trust Christians are agreed that the Author of both books does not lie or deceive.²³ When we compare the truths revealed through these two books and discover what may appear to be conflicting data, *it means that we have improperly processed and interpreted the data presented in one or both of those books*. Neither book is written to deceive. Neither book lies. Can we agree that man makes mistakes; that he is not perfect; that he does deceive; and that he does lie?²⁴ People will go to great lengths to assume the god role (Genesis 3:5), to be the all-knowing authority.

Scientific methods and the dating of rocks and strata must be honestly evaluated. Proverbs' major admonition is for us to "get wisdom." Wisdom in this context is the *skill for living*, and it is obtained through being a good observer of *God's Book of Works*.²⁵ Proverbs tells us that wisdom obtained and used will bless and prosper us and that "the complacency of fools will destroy them" (Proverbs 1:32). Proverbs says

²³ To even imply that God created our world with the "appearance of age" is to make God out to be a deceiver. If God did this, man has no way of knowing what is true or false!

²⁴ Don Stoner carefully exposes deception and lies in his book *A New Look at an Old Earth, What the Creation Institutes are not Telling you about Genesis*, Harvest House, © 1997. When "Christians" distort data to advantage themselves, they push the spiritually unregenerate away from the Savior.

²⁵ Christians would say, "Study the Bible," and rightly so; but Proverbs tell us to be good observers of the world around us too. The true seeker of God will look carefully in both books. The truths learned will bless him. In the end, laziness results in poverty, ignorance, and destruction.

a lot about the self-destruction of the lazy person. Getting wisdom requires a dedication to observing and working. A wise person will examine the fields before pressing for his pet interpretation; and one of those fields is what our earth is saying about itself. Especially in the past sixty or so years, man has learned a tremendous amount about this ball we are flying on through space. Evidences of great age are manifested everywhere.

A careful study of the data discovered from *God's Book of Works* and recorded by geologists and oceanographers should not be ignored by Christians. Generally speaking science has been closely aligned with evolutionary theories, but scientists in these disciplines are not really governed by a belief in evolution or the Bible.²⁶ They are laying before us what the earth is communicating to the seeker of facts about its history. In many cases to lie or distort the data because of bias on the part of the scientist would mean the loss of employment.

Are we honest seekers of truth? Are we open to hearing from *God's Book of Works*? It was in the late 1970s that Dallas Cain gave me a book by Daniel E. Wonderly, *God's Time-Records in Ancient Sediment*. At the time, I was a member of the Creation Research Society (Creation Research Institutes), read their books, and subscribed to their magazine. They did a very good job at presenting evidence to the truth that God created, refuting evolution and creation through chance. However, Wonderly's book opened my eyes and changed me. Since Grace College and Seminary had subscribed to the Creation Research Society's young-earth theology, they fired Dr. Wonderly after his book was published. Thanks to input from Dallas and my personal interest over the years, I have learned much. God gives truth to those who honestly seek it. Some Christians are treating the evidences from *God's Book of Works* in the same way the evolutionary and agnostic scientists treat the Bible—ignoring and unfairly finding fault with it. Both camps are distorting the facts in favor of their theories and biases. What does a scientist see when he reads what unwise Christians write about our earth? Dr. Davis Young, a Christian geologist writes, "Modern creationism in this sense is apologetically and evangelistically ineffective. It could even be a hindrance to the gospel."²⁷ ("Creationism" is the young-earthers' term for themselves and their belief system—a young earth.)

Dr. Daniel E. Wonderly is now with the Lord. His works will never go out of date, though new data could be added to them.²⁸ What he has presented will never change, because Wonderly puts in writing what the earth is telling us about itself. God's love recorded in John 3:16 will never change, and neither will what oil geologists have discovered and learned in their search for petroleum. Wonderly's books relay data used by geologists to find deposits of natural resources. Since their research leads major companies to deposits of oil, gas, and coal, these scientists cannot lie or deceive. Their job depends on properly analyzing the data and discovering truth.

²⁶ For starters watch the 4 DVD series produced by Pioneer TV for History, *How the Earth was Made* and the BBC video, *Earth, The Biography, the story of the world*, by Dr. Iain Stewart (my set is on 2 Blue-ray).

²⁷ Young, Davis A., *Christianity and the Age of the Earth*, © 1988, pub. Artisan Sales, p. 163

²⁸ Though used copies of Wonderly's books can be found through online book dealers, electronic editions are available at www.IBRI.org.

What has man discovered in his efforts to understand and dominate his environment? The evidences I cite below come from various Internet searches as well as the following recommended books:

A New Look at an Old Earth, What the Creation Institutes are not Telling you about Genesis, by Don Stoner, Harvest House, © 1997

Christianity & the Age of the Earth, by Davis Young © 1988

God's Time-Records in Ancient Sediments, by Daniel E. Wonderly, Crystal Press, © 1977

Neglect of Geologic Data: Sedimentary Strata Compared with Young-Earth Creationist Writings, by Daniel E. Wonderly © 1987

Radioactive Dating Methods can be misused and misinterpreted by both atheistic scientists and Christian creationists. What is radioactive dating? What are the limitations?

Carbon-14 is an unstable, radioactive carbon atom. It has 6 protons and 8 neutrons. Carbon-12 is normal and stable with 6 protons and 6 neutrons. Over time in Carbon-14 one neutron will split forming a proton and an electron. This causes the atom to become Nitrogen-14. The half-life of C-14 is 5,770 years. This means that in a bunch of C-14 atoms that fifty percent will have changed into Nitrogen-14 in 5,770 years. Being a gas, the Nitrogen produced escapes into the air. New C-14 is constantly being produced by cosmic rays in the upper atmosphere that bombard N-14 changing it into C-14. The level of C-14 in the air is constant, and the ratio level of C-14 to C-12 is constant. The newly formed C-14 quickly unites with Oxygen to form a radioactive CO₂ molecule, and this radioactive CO₂ is absorbed by plants. Since C-12 lasts forever and C-14 has a half-life of 5,770 years, by measuring the ratio of C-12 to C-14 in dead plants or products made from plants, scientists can use the ratio of C-14 to C-12 to test an item and thereby determine its age. The reliability of this system of radioactive dating has been compared with tree rings, and it can be quite accurate within its natural limits. Carbon-14 dating is fairly reliable for up to 50,000 years. Coal was once plant life, and since it contains virtually no remaining C-14, this causes geologists to conclude that the greater portion of this fossil fuel is much older than 50,000 years. There is a gap between C-14 dating and potassium-argon dating. In other words, there is no reliable radioactive dating method for the establishing of dates/ages between 50,000 and 100,000 years back in time, and potassium-argon dating does not work on coal but on rocks. So for now science is unable to obtain an accurate age for coal.

Potassium-Argon is used for dating volcanic materials and this dating method is fairly accurate from around 100,000 years and beyond. The radioactive Potassium-40 (K-40) is produced in the belly of volcanoes. K-40 decays into Argon-40 (Ar-40) much like C-14 decays into N-14. The half-life of radioactive K-40 is 1.3 billion years. In order to date very old fossils, scientists use this method to measure the rock and soil around the fossil. K-40 is used to date the various strata of the earth, rock formations that came from the inner earth through volcanoes and from under the oceans through the volcanic spaces between the plates.

Fission-Track dating can be used on tiny Zircon crystals (zirconium silicate) found in volcanic ash. These crystals contain a small amount of uranium-238 (U-238) which decays into lead. As the U-238 decays, it creates tracks across the crystal. The number of tracks in the crystal, the amount of remaining U-238 in the crystal, and the known decay rate of U-238 are used to date volcanic ash and rocks through a study of the crystals they contain.

The rings in the Bristlecone Pines have been studied, and it is concluded that these trees record approximately 9,000 years of the earth's history. Bristlecone Pines live at an altitude of 10,000 to 11,000 feet. Because it is cold where they grow, the growing cycle for these trees averages six weeks to three months per year. The tree rings are approximately one/one-hundredth (0.01") of an inch thick. Tree rings record weather patterns.

Delaware Basin in west-central Texas is believed to have been a shallow lake into which sea water flowed and evaporated. It is a body of deposits 1,600 to 2,200 feet thick made of layered lime deposits (calcium sulfate) and dark colored shale (anhydrite) sediments that average one sixteenth of an inch (1/16") in thickness per layer, layers that were laid down year after year from sediment and water evaporation. These layers contain fossilized sea life and other dead matter. Using a liberal estimate of 16 feet of sea water evaporated per year, it would have taken over 135,000 years to form the deposits in this basin which has held petroleum as a prisoner below. Conservative estimates are that it took 300,000 to 500,000 years to form that basin.

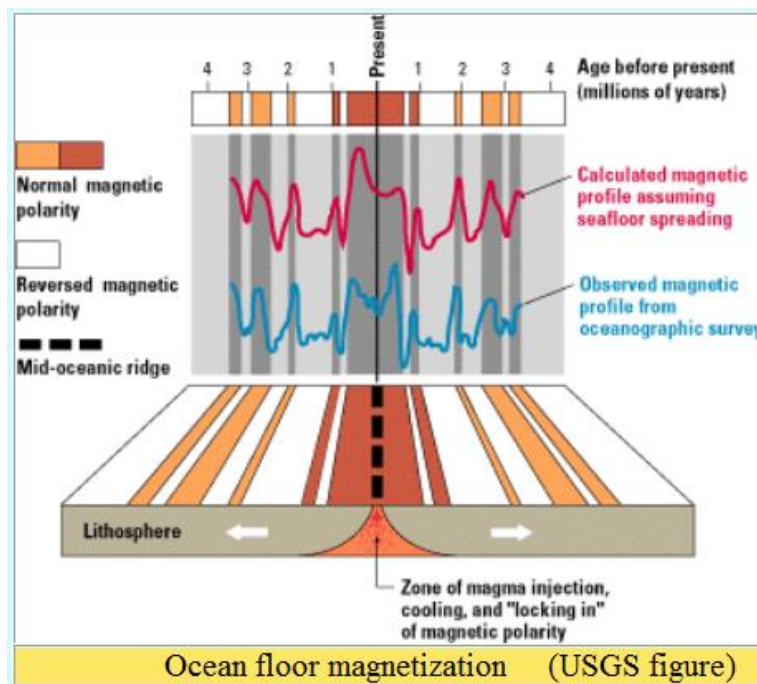
Andros Island in the Bahamas is on top of 14,585 feet of calcium deposits composed of coral and other sea life fossils. Using normal sediment deposit rates, it takes 1,000 years to produce a foot (30 cm) of this sediment. These deposits are fossilized sea animals, many one-celled, and coral. It is layer upon layer of dead matter. The geological evidence indicates that the base for Andros Island took at least 1,400,000 years to form.

Green River Formation (Utah, Colorado, and Wyoming) has over 30,000 feet of layered deposits, estimated at one layer per year with an average thickness of 0.014 millimeter per layer. Like annual tree rings, it is estimated that these deposits took over six million years to form. I would point out that these layers are full of microscopic fossils, fossilized plants, some being tropical, fish, birds, alligators, etc., indicating that that area of the USA was once in the tropic zone, giving evidence to plate tectonics.

Measurements of distances to and between stars and the expansion rate of the universe indicate that the Universe is between 13.5 and 15 billion years old. This has led astronomers to come to believe in the "Big Bang" theory. That may not be how God created the universe; but all evidence from human research and measurements indicates that the universe is quite old. The Big Bang theory does not explain the design of the galaxies, etc. The hand of God is very much evident throughout the universe. His finger prints are all over His creation waiting for the honest seeker to discover. He exists outside

of time, is eternal, and is not in a rush. He has had and continues to have an eternity in which to carry out His plans.

The earth's magnetic field has left a record of its history in every rock, glacier, and the polar ice. These deep deposits of ice record more than the history of the earth's magnetic field but also that of volcanoes, dust storms, and much more. The Pacific and Atlantic Oceans have cracks where some of the Magma from the earth's interior boils out onto the Ocean's floor. As new lava comes up, it pushes the Pacific floor to the east and west. On the east side, it goes under the plates that form the Americas and is the cause for the uplifts that we call the Rocky and Andes Mountain ranges. On the western side, it is bending under the Asian plate out in the Pacific. As hot, new rock boils out like molasses, the iron molecules in it align themselves with the earth's magnetic field. When the rock cools and hardens, those pieces of iron are permanently fixed in place within the rock (the same with ice, as in the over three mile thick ice on Antarctica). As the up-flow from the interior pushes the floor to the east and west, the iron in the rocks becomes like the iron on a cassette tape used to record sounds. Those rocks record the changes in the earth's magnetic field over hundreds of millions of years. The white areas in the following illustration signify reversals in the magnetic polarity recorded on floors of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. ²⁹



This recording is so good that the navy can use the data to navigate subs in the Pacific. In reality these magnetic recordings are everywhere. We now know that the earth's magnet field has had a history of reversing every 500,000 years on average. Currently it has not done so in over 700,000 years, indicating that we are long overdue a polar reversal. The exact location of the North Pole moves an average of 10 kilometers per year and the strength of the magnetic field fluctuates. The Pacific and Atlantic floors record millions of

²⁹ Illustration obtained in June 2011, through, <http://www.phy6.org/earthmag/reversal.htm>

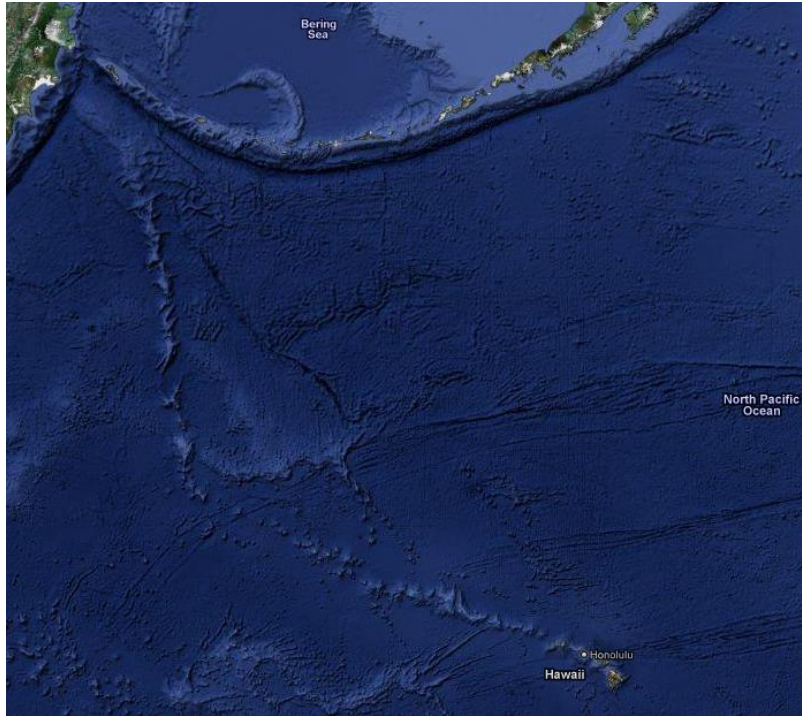
years of the history of the earth's magnetic field. Data obtained from the polar ice on the Antarctica and from glaciers collaborates that recorded on the Pacific and Atlantic Sea floors. The Atlantic floor is expanding by approximately 2.5 centimeters per year, east and west, leading us to the next point.

Plate Tectonics or continental shift was first presented by Alfred Wegener in 1918 but did not come into acceptance until the early 1960s. Before then science did not have the technical resources to fully understand plate tectonics and what the movements of the plates tell us about the history of our planet. GPS systems have verified that Australia is moving north at approximately five inches per year. America is moving away from Europe at approximately one inch per year. The Los Angeles area is moving north at approximately two inches per year. The Atlantic Ocean is growing; the Pacific is shrinking, etc.

Through a study of the soil and rocks, it is believed that India has come from the Antarctica, and that the pressure caused by its northerly movement of approximately two inches per year has produced the Himalayas and Mt. Everest, the highest above sea-level peak on the planet, which is still slowly being pushed upward approximately 3 to 6 centimeters per year. Geological studies reveal that these mountains were once sea floor. The sea floor buckled like an accordion and every fold contains limestone with sea fossils. The top of Mt. Everest is limestone containing sea fossils.

The Hawaiian Islands were formed by a hole in the earth's mantle. The heat and pressure from the Magma burns a hole in the mantle and crust of the ocean floor causing a volcano. As the plate of the ocean floor moves West and Northwest, the hole is eventually plugged and a new one is made, causing a new island to form. Those islands stand higher above the ocean floor than does Everest above sea level. The pressure at that spot causes the sea floor to rise, but as the floor moves westward, it sinks back to normal, causing the islands to eventually sink below the surface of the Pacific. Through mapping of the pacific floor, a chain of islands can be seen going all the way to Russia. To illustrate, below is a picture from Google of a part of that Pacific Ocean flood:

Picture in on the following page. Hawaii is at the bottom-center.



From an April 2011 prayer letter from Rev. George King, a missionary in Japan for 50 years, I quote:

This country is accustomed to earthquakes (but never one like this). As you heard, its intensity was 9.0. That is 8,000 times more powerful than the one in New Zealand just shortly before. The energy released was 600,000,000 (read that Six Hundred Million) times the energy of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. The quake moved portions of northeast Japan by as much as 7.9 feet closer to North America. A 250-mile stretch of coastline dropped vertically by 2.0 feet. The earthquake shifted the Earth's axis by 9.8 inches. This deviation led to a number of small planetary changes, including the length of day and the tilt of the earth. The speed of the Earth's rotation increased, shortening the day by 1.8 microseconds due to the redistribution of Earth's mass. The axial shift was caused by the redistribution of mass on the Earth's surface changing the planet's moment of inertia (because of the conservation of angular momentum, such changes in inertia result in small changes to the Earth's rate of rotation). Since that first earthquake we have had 1,000 after-shocks, with over sixty reading over 6.0 and 3 over 7.0.

What George has shared about a current event, is one that has been repeated millions of times throughout our planet's history. Our moon is moving three centimeters per year away from the earth. All of these events speak of age, not thousands but hundreds of millions and even billions of years in earth-time.

A study of plate tectonics has caused scientists to believe that at one time there was one land mass, which I believe the Bible teaches. The plates move slowly. This movement is the force that causes earthquakes and has produced the mountain ranges. Plate tectonics gives evidence of hundreds of millions of years of time. No matter how one cuts it, the

geological evidences will not fit the young-earthers' geological theories, their theories about the age of the earth and universe, and their theology.

On the subject of time, I have only scratched the surface. Signs of a very old earth are everywhere. Noah's year-long flood cannot explain these evidences. There is no supportive evidence for a belief in a young earth, geologically or biblically.³⁰

Since *God's Book of Works* does not lie and deceive, and since the evidences for a very old earth are astronomical, the logical conclusion is that those who teach that the Bible presents a very young earth, they say no more than 10,000 years, are reading the text through the bias of their colored glasses. They are misinterpreting the data from both of God's books. This is written with conviction from what years of study have built into me.

The focus in this point has been more on what *God's Book of Works* reveals; and hopefully we shall see that these facts do not conflict with what the Scriptures are telling us. A careful study of the Creation Institutes' literature, DVDs, etc., will expose the young-earth people as having a very strong bias that causes them to distort the facts presented in both of God's books.³¹

The fact that there are multitudes of strong evidences for a very old universe and earth makes the premise of those holding to the belief in a recently created earth to come up short. The other three positions on the creation account in Genesis accept age as a fact; but in their study of Genesis one, have they found the answers? Can we?

Are We Properly Interpreting The Biblical Data?

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.³² The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

Some say the first two verses are part of the first day.³³ Others believe they are an opening statement and should not be included in the paragraph of the first day? Why the

³⁰ See *A Biblical Case for an Old Earth*, by David Snooke.

³¹ *A New Look at an Old Earth, What the Creation Institutes are not Telling you about Genesis*, by Don Stoner © 1997, and *Neglect of Geologic Data: Sedimentary Strata Compared with Young-Earth Creationist Writings*, by Daniel E. Wonderly © 1987 specifically address this matter.

³² "The heavens and the earth and all their host He made by [His] word." From 4Q422, a paraphrase of Genesis, in *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, by Geze Vermes

³³ Henry M. Morris, a young-earthier with the Creation Research Institute, in his commentary on Genesis, *The Genesis Record*, © 1976, says that verses 1 and 2 belong in the first day, but he treats them as a separate paragraph. Quoting from a footnote in Part 2 of *Genesis 1:1-3: Creation or Re-Creation*, by Mark F. Rooker, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol 149, © 1992, electronic edition, he shows that the phrase "in the beginning" is an opening statement that covers all: "This has been the traditional understanding since the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek by the Jews of Alexandria . . . The Greek phrase =Ev ἀρχῆ at the beginning of the Gospel of John reflects the Septuagint's translation of בְּרֵאשִׁית from Genesis 1:1. This usage also reinforces the

confusion about this and the six days? Why is the Genesis creation account criticized by so many of our educators in the fields of science, perhaps more than any other text of the Bible? The problem is with the interpreter—not the Bible.

Do we really understand Genesis 1:1 through 2:3? Has this portion of Scripture been justly translated and interpreted? Do we understand the culture at the time of writing, the world view and the methods of communication? Do we have a handle on the Hebrew grammar, literary styles used at that time, and the weaving of truth through the literary fabric that makes this a beautiful tapestry? Is it a tapestry? The framework proponents believe it is.

As we approach this section of our study, it is important that we have a proper understanding of the place of the observer from the prospective of the telling of the creation narrative in Genesis. I think we tend to look at the Genesis revelation as though we were the observer watching everything happening through a window as we hover in a space ship some distance from the Planet. That approach will distort our perception and interpretation. The creation story is actually told as though the place of the observer were on the surface of the earth in the Mediterranean area. God is giving this account to Moses and Israel from their perspective, with their feet planted firmly on the ground.

Another error is to presume that our world view has been in vogue from the time of Adam and then to impose it upon the text. My first hermeneutical principle: “The Bible is an accommodation of divine truths to the human mind,”³⁴ is very important in our understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures. God is communicating to Israel, 1,500 years before Christ, communicating using their language, their culture, their literary styles, and their understanding of the world. God is not communicating in twenty-first century English to a culture impacted by the invention and use of the microscope and telescope for over 500 years, to one that has confirming evidences of a round earth that revolves around the sun within a galaxy in a vast universe, to people who have walked on the moon and explored the deepest crevices of the seas, to people who have processed data from holes drilled thousands of feet below the surface of the earth from almost every nation’s continental shelf in order to study the strata, to people with extremely accurate GPS systems placed all over this planet, to a people who have recently accepted into their understanding of our planet the evidences of plate tectonics, to a generation that has been able to look closer than any other at DNA and at stars 13 billion light-years from us, etc.

For example, let’s assume that the birth of Jesus were to happen today. As God through the angel speaks to Mary about being the bearer of the Savior, she responds, “I don’t understand how what you are saying can happen. I’m a virgin and a dedicated follower of

idea that the absolute beginning is what is in view.” To me, verses 1 and 2 are an opening statement. God spoke the universe into existence and fashioned it to fulfill His plan. Verse 2 describes the state of Planet Earth before the actions taken and recorded in the remainder of chapter one, as God began forming and preparing the earth for plants, fish, birds, animals, and eventually human kind.

³⁴ Mosher, Phillip D., *This We Believe, An In-depth Look at Bible Doctrine*, © 2007, page 11

God; and I will not engage in sex outside of marriage.” The angel would reply, “The Spirit of God will come to you and will implant a fertile ovum in your womb. You will be a surrogate mother for the Son of God.” A twenty-first century teenager would fully understand this, because God would be speaking within the context of her culture, education, and language. In the year 4 BC, no one would have had the slightest idea about what “fertile ovum” and “surrogate mother” meant. God spoke to Mary within her cultural setting, not ours; and yet the biblical story is scientifically accurate and remains relevant through the centuries. That is the amazing part in all of this. No human author could possibly do this. Genesis one and science dovetail. They do not conflict. Interpreters do.

God did not tell Moses any of these recently discovered and accepted evidences that are the supporting columns in our current knowledge of this planet and our solar system. The miracle is that what God gave to Moses is an accounting that has continued to stand as reliable and as scientifically accurate today as it was when given some 3,500 years ago. Only the all knowing, all powerful Creator-God could do this. Anything produced by man would be dated and would soon become irrelevant fables.

In the late 1960s and the 1970s we ministered among the Nambiquaras in the interior of Brazil. Part of their creation story was that man came out of a hole in the ground. In the 1960s, when we told them that man was walking on the surface of the moon, they laughed. Of all the creation accounts of his day, what Moses received and wrote was like no other, and yet it was spoken within the context of the world view and culture of his day. Dr. Bruce K. Waltke has well said: ³⁵

Where did Israel get this higher theology? Why did it not appear among any other people? Neither the brilliant Greek philosophers of later ages, nor Israel’s Babylonian and Egyptian contemporaries, so far ahead of them in the arts and science, attained to it. All the world was steeped in mythical thought except Israel. Her religion was like the sun compared to the night. No umbilical cord attached the faith of Moses and his successors with the other religions of the ancient Near East. Furthermore, any religion that even approaches the Mosaic faith, such as Mohammedanism, borrowed it from Israel.

To impose our word view upon the biblical text would be extremely presumptuous, to say the least. When addressing the first chapter of Genesis, we must humbly keep in mind God’s words to Job, words that some believe to be older than those recorded in Genesis:

⁴ “Where were you when I founded the earth? Tell me, if you know so much. ⁵ Do you know who determined its dimensions or who stretched the measuring line across it? ⁶ On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷ when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸ Who shut up the sea behind closed doors when it gushed forth from the womb, ⁹ when I made the clouds

³⁵ Waltke, Bruce K., *The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3*, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Volume 132, © 1975, from an electronic edition

its blanket and dense fog its swaddling cloth, ¹⁰ when I made the breakers its boundary set its gates and bars, ¹¹ and said, ‘You may come this far, but no farther; here your proud waves must stop’?” (Job 38:4–11 CJB³⁶)

...

³ Then Job answered the Lord and said, ⁴ “Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth.” (Job 40:3–4)

When entering this subject, humility is the only good approach. It is better to say, “I don’t know;” or “I don’t understand;” while always affirming our agreement with the statement quoted at the opening of this chapter from the Apostles Creed. We stand over 3,500 years away from the day when God gave Israel the creation account through Moses. Let’s be honest. To actually know the level of man’s understanding of the cosmos that far away in time from us, to obtain a knowledgeable grasp of the literary methods commonly used at that time to communicate, to know how they understood chapter one at that time and in their culture, etc. is beyond our reach. To make this an issue of faith is to “engage in word-battles.”³⁷ This attitude does not edify but divides and violates the standard set forth in 1st John 2:22-24 and 2nd John 9.

Almost all biblical scholars treat Genesis 1:1-2 as an opening, introductory statement. In 1737, William Whiston wrote *A New Theory of the Earth*. On page 4 he states: “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, says the Scripture; which is, as I take it, a Preface or Introduction to the following Account.*”³⁸

William D. Ramey, in a paper written in April 1997 and entitled *LITERARY ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 1:1—2:3*, makes this literary observation:

“The Literary Structure of Genesis 1:1—2:3

“A “He [God] created” (1:1b)

“B “God” (1:1b)

“C “heavens and earth” (1:1b)

“X FORMING AND FILLING OF THE EARTH (1:2-31)

“C’ “heavens and earth” (2:1)

“B’ “God” (2:2)

“A’ “He [God] had made” (2:3)”

Genesis 1:1-2 and 2:1-3 are like bookends placed around the story that is woven through the linear reading of chapter 1, verses 3 through 31, which records eight “let there be” events: 1. Light, 2. Skies, 3. Land, 4. Vegetation, 5. Luminaries, 6. Fish and birds, 7.

³⁶ The *Complete Jewish Bible*, by David H. Stern, © 1998, here cited because of its accuracy in translation into standard English of our day

³⁷ 2 Timothy 2:14 “Remind *them* of these things, and solemnly charge *them* in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless *and leads* to the ruin of the hearers.”

³⁸ Copies of this book are available from several sources, try Amazon.com. My copy is a bound photocopy. In this quote some of the old English spellings have been changed, e.g. “fays” to “says.”

Animals, and 8. Man and woman. These eight acts of the Creator are laid out upon a structure of six days, and are the creation narrative. Those eight acts also agree with secular science. God's *Book of Works* and His *Book of Words* are harmonious.

Genesis does not tell us *when* God created the "heavens and the earth." Nowhere in all of *God's Book of Words* are we told the answer to the "*when*" question. Anyone who would impose a date, implying or saying that it is "scriptural," would be guilty of adding to God's Word, misrepresenting It, and dishonoring It and the Spirit of God who breathed It.

Most scholars also agree that the second verse gives us a picture of Planet Earth at some stage in the development of our solar system as God began to shape it as the dwelling place for man, who is the focal point and concluding act of His creation. The proponents of the Gap Theory like to put a different slant on the second verse. These are opening verses that are introductory to what is written from 1:3 through 31.

The Bible is a Jewish book, a truth the Catholic Church (the original and later both branches) did its best to erase. The first 11 chapters are brief. They are there to give Israel a record of its roots. Though brief, what is recorded in those chapters is accurate, though we may not properly interpret or understand them.

Genesis chapters 1 through 11 cover approximately 2,500 years of human history, possibly more. Chapter 11 focuses in on Shem's family line, taking the record through Eber, from which "Hebrew" is derived, down to Terah, the father of Abram. Chapter 12 begins with the first statement of God's eternal promise to Abram and the birth of the Jewish people through the Patriarchs, as recorded through the remainder of Genesis. From the genealogy in chapter 11, the story is about Abram, then his son Isaac, and next Jacob, Abram's grandson. In chapters 12 and 15 God makes a pact with this family, which He repeats many times to Isaac, Jacob, Israel, David, and the Jewish people to bless them and through them to bring blessings to all the families of the earth. Through the Hebrew people, God promised to send the Redeemer. Genesis is the book of beginnings and its story is about the Jewish people. Genesis 3:15 promises the Savior, born through a woman, Who would crush Satan. The Virgin Mary, a Jew of the family of David, was prophesied in that verse. God chose Abram, Isaac, and Jacob with his twelve sons to be a nation of priests (Exodus 19:6). This purpose was announced after they had become a nation and been miraculously freed from Egyptian slavery. Through them God's plan was to have a nation of peoples who served Him and testified of Him so that the world would know Him. Through them He promised the Messiah, who would give His life to bring man back into fellowship with the Creator.

The creation account in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 is introductory to the book and Israel. Briefly God is telling Israel, "I created from nothing all that you see and feel and the human race." The statement: "Here is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created" (Genesis 2:4a CJB), is typical of the words used to indicate

the opening of a new section in Genesis, eleven in all.³⁹ In the second section (2:4 thru 4:26), we are given details about the creation of man, his fall into sin, and his degeneration. The next section (5:1-6:8), records God's disgust and plan to destroy a rebellious humanity. Next is the record of the flood and then the Tower of Babel, the confusion of the tongues, and then the setting apart of Abram.

There has been disagreement as to when in human history man concluded that the earth is not flat, that it is not in the center, and that the sun and stars are not prisoners to paths above it, etc. Some Greek philosophers reasoned that it was round, but their views were not accepted. Dr. Ross has summarized it well when he writes:

The revolution launched by Copernicus (1473-1543), shifting people's concepts of reality from an Earth-centered to a sun-centered astronomical system, took well over a century. Some still resist it today. Ironically, the resistance to both Copernicus's and Einstein's work was *fueled by fear of what their new view said about God and the Bible*. Sixteenth-century scholars feared a loss of respect for both. *Twentieth-century scholars feared an increase of respect*. [emphasis added]⁴⁰

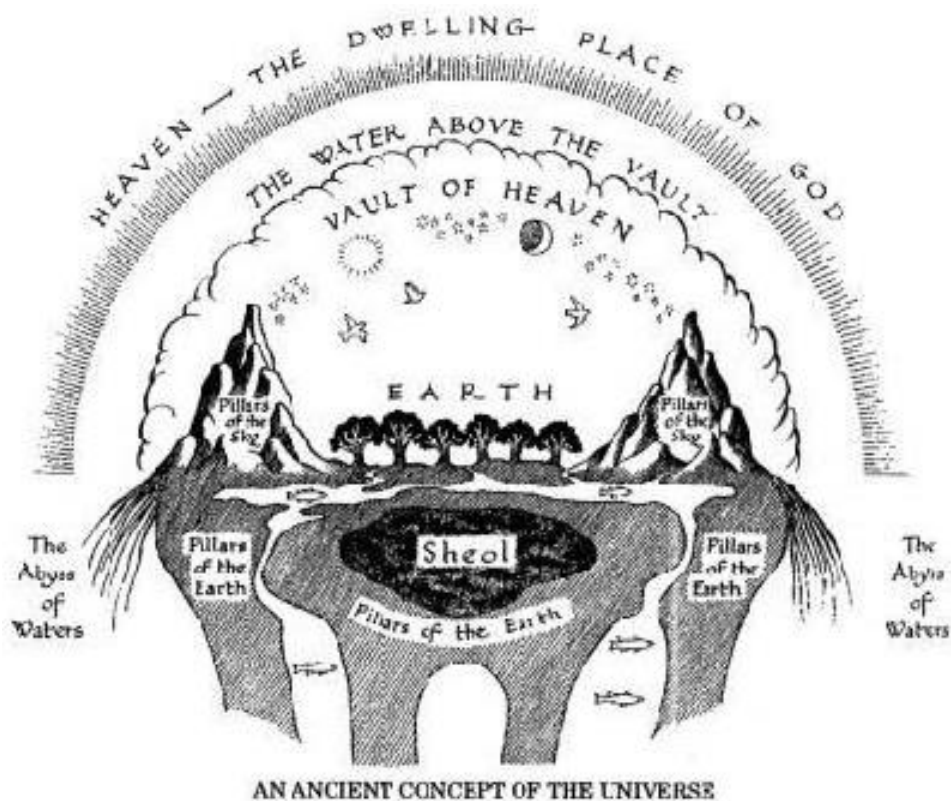
Reyburn and Fry, in *A handbook on Genesis*, make this challenge and observation:

Translators are advised to study carefully the picture of the universe as it was understood by the ancient Hebrew authors. This may be done by reading the relevant articles in a Bible dictionary, along with such passages as Psa 104.2–3, 59; 148.4; Job 26.11; 37.18; 38.4–11; Pro 8.28–29; Amos 9.6.⁴¹ (includes graphic next page)

³⁹ תּוֹלְדוֹת (*tólēdôt*) *descendants*, Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; and 37:2. Verse 1:1 does not use *tólēdôt*, but if 1:1 were added as an opening marker for the first section, there would be 12.

⁴⁰ Ross PhD, Hugh, *The Creator and the Cosmos, How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*, Navpress © 1995, page 57 (Dr. Ross is a Christian astrophysicist.)

⁴¹ Reyburn, W. D., and Fry, E. M., *A handbook on Genesis*. UBS handbook series (27). New York: United Bible Societies, quote includes the graphic that follows. © 1997



Though one may not agree with every detail that these authors have presented, we must recognize that when God gave the first chapters of Genesis to Moses, man's depth in scientific understanding and knowledge of our world was very shallow in comparison to that of today.

Ruth and I spent twelve years of our lives as missionaries in Brazil among the Nambiquara Indians. These people were very intelligent with a language that demanded details and that indicated with clarity the person being addressed, the vantage point of the speaker (was he a witness, did someone else tell him, or was he stating a conclusion drawn from evidence), the time frame, etc. These people believed in a flat earth. They did not know that the moon traveled around the earth and the earth around the sun.

In giving Genesis one, God was accommodating divine truth to the human mind, communicating to a group of people within the context of their language, culture, scientific understanding, and world view. There is no evidence that as educated as he was, that Moses and the other intellectuals of his day ever theorized that the earth was a sphere, revolved around the sun, was one of eight planets, and that this solar system was a mere dot in a very big galaxy among billions of others in a vast universe. Genesis one communicated truth to that generation, but in doing so, God through His foreknowledge knew what man would be learning over the proceeding 3,500 years and on, until the Messiah's second coming. Nowhere does the first chapter of Genesis conflict with what

we know today.⁴² This gives very strong evidence for the chapter having been written under the guidance and provision of the Holy Spirit of God. No mere man could have produced this record.

Though the Greeks, primarily philosophers, had come up with the idea of a round earth, their theories were rejected by the mainline theologians during the earlier years of Christianity, because philosophy had not convinced them on other matters, and the reasoning was thin. Augustine (354-430), the bishop of Hippo and the foundational principal behind the Catholic Church's interpretation of Scriptures and beliefs, in his *The City of God*, wrote: "But for the fable that there are Antipodes, that is to say, men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, men who walk with their feet opposite ours, that is on no ground credible."

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), a student of astronomy, using his naked eye in studying the movements of the stars, concluded that our earth was not in the center but was a sphere that revolved around the sun with other planets.⁴³ The normally accepted belief by the church was that the earth was in the center. Isn't that what the simple, linear reading indicates, especially if one includes verses 1 and 2 as part of day one and believe the text teaches that the luminaries were created on day four? Both Catholics and Protestants rejected the scientific conclusions of Copernicus.⁴⁴ Today, only an unlearned and deficient person would do so. The evidences from *God's Book of Works* eventually changed the minds of the theologians, who had been wrong in their interpretation of the Bible and so dogmatic that they excommunicated the scientists and forbade the reading of their writings.

What is the church of today doing with what scientists have found, have been placing before us, and have concluded from the evidences? Are Christians, as theological scholars had done before them, rejecting what *God's Book of Works* has communicated—on what ground? Could these theologians' understanding of Genesis be impacted by hundreds of years of bias from the same group that rejected Copernicus rather than carefully examining and researching the data? Have we read and learned from what Jesus said to the religious leaders during His days on earth (see Matthew 23:29-32⁴⁵)?

⁴² Because the word "circle" is used in Job 22:14 and Isaiah 40:22, some think the Bible teaches the earth is round. This expression is used in the same way that we would say "his circle of friends" and should not be interpreted to mean a "globe."

⁴³ As pointed out earlier, if one includes Genesis 1:1-2 in day one, making the text read that on that day God created the earth and light, and then on day four one believes that God created the sun, moon, and stars, this method of not dividing the text into paragraphs and then interpreting it does place the earth in the center.

⁴⁴ The Catholic Church forbade the teachings of Copernicus and Galileo. In 1758 Pope Benedict XIV lifted those restrictions.

⁴⁵ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had been *living* in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in *shedding* the blood of the prophets.' Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure *of the guilt* of your fathers." Matthew 23:29-32

To illustrate a point, I present one of the earlier interpretations from the late 1800s and early 1900s. It should be noted that when Genesis one speaks of God making an expanse (firmament in KJV), as in verse 6, the Hebrew word for this is רָקִיעַ (*rāqīaʿ*). This word contains the idea of “an expansion of plates, i.e. broad plates, beaten out (BDB, p. 956), *rāqīaʿ* may refer to a limited space, such as that of the canopy over the cherubim, under the throne in Ezekiel’s vision (1:22, 26).”⁴⁶ Because this word can indicate a solid such as a “canopy” or “plate,” this caused some sincere Christians to believe that the Bible teaches that there was a layer of water held above the earth as a canopy that caused a green house effect and that this canopy blocked all dangerous solar radiation and the bad rays. They believe that there was no rain until the flood when this canopy fell, contributing to the flood waters and changing conditions so that in the future when it would rain, as the sun shined through the rain, a rainbow appeared. Since man’s lifespan was shortened after the flood, those interpreters have blamed it on increased radiation. It seems to be common practice to use a word or a phrase plus a big imagination to create a doctrine and then divide the Body of Christ over it.

Have we correctly interpreted the Genesis creation account? Or, do we carry a bias that is blinding us from the truth?

The Hebrew language is not like English. The letters are different. It reads from right to left. In Hebrew there are no vowel letters as we think of them in the English alphabet, though there are three letters that suggest vowels. The context tells the Hebrew reader what vowel sounds to use. The vowel markings of the Masoretic text were added around 1,200 years ago in an effort to preserve the pronunciation and are not a part of the original text.

It is my belief that the first words of the Bible can and should be translated: “In the beginning of *time* God had created⁴⁷ the heavens⁴⁸ and the lands⁴⁹” (italics indicate added words). Eugene Roop has noted,

Neither Hebrew syntax nor historical investigation can clearly decide for one translation over the other. . . . Genesis 1:1–2 shows less concern with philosophical

⁴⁶ R. Laird Harris, Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, electronic ed., 862 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999). BDB is for Brown, Driver, Briggs, *A Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1905. This is also taught in a Jewish commentary by Everett Fox, *In The Beginning, a New English Rendition of the Book of Genesis*.

⁴⁷ This verb we translate *create* (בָּרָא *bārāʿ*) is only used with God. God created by saying “Let us.” All material objects have been formed from nothing. See discussion on the pluperfect below.

⁴⁸ The Hebrew word (שָׁמַיִם *šāmayim*) can indicate the physical heavens or sky as well as the abode of God.

⁴⁹ The Hebrew (אֲרֶצַח *ʾerets*) literally means the land, soil. Rendering it “earth” in our English translation, not meaning a piece of dirt or land but to indicate a celestial ball that revolves around the sun, is an imposition of our world view upon the text, though “earth” would be true and scientifically accurate. There is no Old Testament Hebrew word that means a planet that travels around the sun.

speculation than with theological confession: the creating God provides us with a livable world.⁵⁰

Though in our culture properly recording events on a time-line and the noting of the date and time are important, whereas in Genesis 1 time is not in view. *The divinely established livable world for man is the main focus of the creation account.* That is the picture the tapestry of words is presenting. Details as to “how” and “when” are not given. The truths that man and his place of residence were created by God are the major emphasis of this divinely inspired record.

Since language reflects culture and is married to it, then we can surmise that the Hebrew people were not time but event focused. When the sun is your clock and travel is by foot or a camel, time becomes insignificant. Happenings and accomplishments are what matter. We Americans place a very heavy emphasis on time, on the “when” question. The “how” question was answered adequately for the original recipients of the revelation, but it may not be what a scientific minded twenty-first century American would have desired. Even the recording of the order of the events on a progressing time line is not a Hebrew thing. What transpired was. God tells Israel and us that they and we are His creation, that man is made in His image, and that He constructed our dwelling place. In this context, God is our Father. He created us and has provided for us, as a loving and caring Father. After we chose to disobey Him, He removed us from that special garden He had arranged for man and sent him into a world where life is dangerous and difficult, where the end is physical death. But, as our heavenly Father, He continues to love us and do everything to woo us back into His arms. God created human kind for fellowship.

Hebrew verbs are not at all like English verbs. Again, context can help in determining the sense for translation. Rather than past, present, future, etc., verbs in biblical Hebrew communicate only two aspects: the Hebrew “perfect” expressing completed action and the “imperfect” expressing an uncompleted action. Though these seem similar to the English past and future tenses, that analysis is not adequate and is weak. Hebrew focuses upon who is acting, what was done (the state, in the case of the verb to *be*), and on answering the question: “Is it finished or still in process?”

Completion may be understood as to whether or not the action is finished, on-going, or still needs to be done. This is NOT the same as “past, present, and future” tenses in English. If you try to understand the tense system of the Bible in terms of “past”, “present”, or “future” sooner or later you will wind up with translations that seem to contradict the intent of the words on the page. [“Bible” would be the Old Testament.]⁵¹

The Hebrew perfect tense expresses action that is complete, whether that action is past,⁵² present,⁵³ or future.⁵⁴ When giving the English reader a translation of Genesis one, most

⁵⁰ Eugene F. Roop, in an electronic edition of *Genesis, Believers Church Bible Commentary*, 25 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1987).

⁵¹ From: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~c032101/grammar/verb.html>

⁵² 1st Samuel 17:36, “has killed both the bear and the lion”. The second verb in the verse is in the perfect though it describes a future action: “Philistine will be like one of them”.

⁵³ Job 24:13 “want to know”

translators have chosen to use the English simple past.⁵⁵ In Hebrew there is no equivalent to the pluperfect⁵⁶ and the imperfect⁵⁷ tenses of English. The Latin languages really do a better job than English at communicating the scenario of continuous action in the past. By pluperfect, I mean action that transpired over time in the past before completion. By imperfect, I mean action that was continuing in the past and may or may not have been completed. For example:

Jane studied at the University of South Florida. (simple past, giving no indication of continuous action over time in the past, though her studies could have covered years)

Jane was studying at the University of South Florida. (imperfect past, a continuing of action over time is expressed by the verb without clarifying the aspect of completion)

Jane had studied at the University of South Florida. (pluperfect past, a continuing action over time is expressed by the verb with the termination clarified, indicating that she does not study there anymore)

The verb in biblical Hebrew would not make these distinctions in action and time.

Continuous action in the past is not clarified in the Hebrew verb forms. Because language and culture are married, this would indicate that the speakers of Hebrew did not consider these details to be important. However, our culture places these details at a high level of importance. The Latin languages communicate the imperfect and pluperfect even better than English, making the recording of time in the verb form of higher importance in the Latin culture.

When translating Hebrew, the context may indicate that we should use the imperfect or pluperfect in the translation, though the tense (perfect) of the Hebrew verb only tells us that the action is complete.⁵⁸ A signal for translating the Hebrew text into the pluperfect can be word order. In Hebrew the normal word order is Verb + Subject + Object. Arthur C. Custance, in his book titled *Without Form and Void*, in the third chapter titled “The Pluperfect in Hebrew,” has put together one of the best treatments of the indicators in the Hebrew Old Testament that would signal the use of the pluperfect in an English translation. His work draws much upon a book published in 1892 by S. R. Driver entitled *A Treatise on the Hebrew Tenses*.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Jeremiah 31:16 “they will return”

⁵⁵ I have been told that *The Book of Beginnings*, by Alexander Marlowe, 1938, did translate using the pluperfect. This is very rare among English translations.

⁵⁶ The English pluperfect past tense is a form of the verb that expresses action completed before a specified or implied time in the past, used to refer to an event that had continuing relevance in the past; a continuous action that came to completion in the past.

⁵⁷ The English imperfect or past imperfect tense communicates an action that took place in the past, continuing over a period of time, and the time of the completion of the action has not been specified in the verb. Pluperfect and imperfect are similar. These details as to action are not expressed in Hebrew verbs.

⁵⁸ Though not the objective of this discussion, the perfect tense can be used to express future actions.

⁵⁹ Custance’s book, *Without For and Void*, was published in 1970 and is available on line, chapter 3 being available at <http://www.custance.org/Library/WFANDV/chap3.html>

Custance has shown with an abundance of supporting proofs, that when the Hebrew word order places the subject before the verb that this can be an indicator for the translator to use the pluperfect in the translation language. To illustrate his point, Custance cites several biblical Old Testament texts from which I list the following as examples:

- Gen.20.4: "But Abimelech had not (actually) come near her.. ..."
- I Sam. 14.27: "Jonathan had not heard" that his father had given the order forbidding the eating of a certain honeycomb."
- Num. 13.22: "Now Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt"
- Josh. 6.22: "But Joshua had said unto the two men...."
- Josh. 18.1: "... and the land had (already) been subdued before them"
- I Sam. 9.15: "Now, the evening before Saul came, the Lord had told Samuel...."
- I Sam. 28.3: "Saul had put away all that had familiar spirits"
- II Sam. 18.18: "Now Absalom, in his lifetime, had taken and reared up a pillar unto himself...."

Many of our English translations vary in translating these illustrations and others.

Max Rogland in his article in the *Westminster Theological Journal Volume 70* (© 2008), *Abram's Persistent Faith: Hebrew Verb Semantics In Genesis 15:6*, has noted another construction in Hebrew that can signal continuous action in the past:

The "waw-consecutive perfect" or *w^oqatal* form was a productive member of the Biblical Hebrew verbal paradigm with a range of different functions. When referring to past situations, *w^oqatal* indicates various kinds of imperfective situations, in contrast to the qatal form, which marks a non-imperfective past tense. Thus, for example, the *w^oqatal* form is used to describe an activity that occurred repeatedly.

Genesis 1:2: (Hebrew reads right to left)

וְהָאָרֶץ	הָיְתָה	תְּהוֹ	וּבְהוֹ	וַחֲשֹׁךְ	עַל־פְּנֵי	תְּהוֹם
ו · ה · אָרֶץ	הִיָּה	תְּהוֹ	ו · בְּהוֹ	ו · חֲשֹׁךְ	עַל · פֶּן	תְּהוֹם
land the and	had become	formless	empty and	darkness and	surface over	deep the
←						
וְרוּחַ	אֱלֹהִים	מְרַחֶפֶת	עַל־פְּנֵי	הַמַּיִם:		
ו · רוּחַ	אֱלֹהִים	מְרַחֶפֶת	עַל · פֶּן	הַמַּיִם:		
Spirit and	God	had been hovering	surface over	waters the		
←						

The verse begins with the waw (ו = and) followed by a noun (הָאָרֶץ = the land). The verb (הָיְתָה⁶⁰) is in the Hebrew perfect. This same construction follows in 2b where the Spirit of God is said to be hovering over the waters. Following what Custance and Rogland have pointed out, verse 2 can be translated using the English pluperfect:

And the land [earth] had become formless and void *with* darkness over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God had been hovering over the surface of the waters.
 [italics used for supplied word and brackets for alternate translation]

⁶⁰ הָיָה *hāyāh*: A verb meaning to exist, to be, to become, to happen, to come to pass, to be done; see Warren Baker, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* : Old Testament, 262 (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003).

Though verse 16 does not meet the pluperfect requirements presented by Custance, it does meet those of Rogland. Verse 16 would be better translated:

God had formed two luminaries, the greater to dominate the day, the lesser to dominate the night, and the stars.

The context principle supports this translation. If we accept verse 1 as an initial opening statement that declares that in the beginning of time God had made the universe including our galaxy, the sun, Planet Earth with its exceptionally large moon, etc., and that verse 2 defines the resulting condition of Planet Earth as God then begins to shape and develop it for life such as plants, fish, animals, and man, then that context impacts how one would translate verse 16. Another important factor is that the verse does not use the Hebrew word for “create” (בָּרָא *bārā*’, an action only ascribed to God) but the Hebrew for “made” (עָשָׂה *‘āsā*), another indication that it was not on the fourth day that God created the luminaries. They were already present as part of the creation done “in the beginning.” Those luminaries were already shining on day one; and by day four God had cleansed and developed the atmosphere to a point where those luminaries had become clearly visible on the surface of the land (earth), the point of observation for the recipients of this creation chapter.

It has been common to render the Hebrew perfect tense with the English simple past. Since the Hebrew perfect communicates completed action and does not communicate details about time, we do not know if the action took just minutes or a very long span of time, maybe thousands, even millions of years. All we know is the action has been completed. One must look at the context and the grammar *in hopes* of getting it right in the translation. When the biblical Hebrew is not clear, rarely have the English translators ventured to render the verb in the pluperfect or imperfect, though such a translation may well be legitimate. Let’s be honest: *The Hebrew perfect and imperfect have no English equivalents*. Translators tend to follow traditions, not to mention personal biases.

My Brazilian Portuguese Bible reads: “A terra **era** sem forma e vazia . . .” (verse 2: the land had been without form and empty). This verb form (*era*) expresses a continuing state in the past adding an element of longevity to the time element placed in the verb to indicate that for some time the earth had been without form and empty. The young-earthers would stress that this all happened (the creation of earth, the moving of the Spirit over the surface, and the creation of light—not the sun—on day one, in less than 24 hours. I believe the Portuguese rendering is a better translation than that of the KJV and many of today’s available English translations. I also believe verses 1 and 2 are not part of day-one while the young-earthers do. Verse one is a summary statement, and verse 2 describes the state of Planet Earth as God focuses His attention on it. The earth “had become”, having arrived at the state of being without form and empty, meaning that God had been in the processes of creating the universe and had now reached the point in His acts of creating where He begins to concentrate on His purpose for all of this, developing the dwelling place for humanity, the apex of His creative acts.

Throughout my Christian life, it has been my conclusion that it was many billions of years ago that God began creating and supervising the building of the universe, with the

creating of our galaxy, solar system, Planet Earth, living things, etc. with humanity as His goal.

The Big Bang theory falls extremely short. The Big Bang theory is like setting off a hand-grenade. Little pieces fly in all directions. In the universe there is design everywhere. A design indicating planning, and it points to a Designer. Without One, what we see and are learning could not have happened. Chance does not create order. All around us we see order and purpose, not disorder and chaos.

God's Book of Works is telling us that He began His creation long ago, eventually forming our solar system, the earth, the moon, etc. Verse 2 tells us that as the Creator's work progressed, there was a celestial ball we call Planet Earth that had been under development and was now dark, without form, and empty of any life forms, as science believes. If we accept the opinions of science, it was hot, steamy with a lot of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) in the atmosphere, so much so that light could not reach the surface. Science has conjectured that the first life forms were small life forms, such as bacteria and plankton, which were designed to absorb carbon and release the oxygen and hydrogen. I find it interesting that petroleum contains the fossil remains of plankton. Verse 2 focuses in on the earth (land in Hebrew) and on God acting to form it into a dwelling place for life and eventually man. Both Genesis and science tell us that God's first action was to clear the atmosphere enough so that light could reach the surface significantly enough to make a distinction between night and day.

At this point I want to take a detour and then return. It appears that in this process of preparing the earth for animal life and man, that as soon as they could exist the Lord created the tubular animals that are thousands of feet under the surface of the seas living in temperatures above boiling at extreme pressures. Those animals live on methane boiling up from the mantle and need no oxygen or light to live. He also created bacteria that eat some of the poisonous gases, things like plankton that live in the surface areas of seas and absorb carbon from the atmosphere, and stromatolites that do the same. These animals and plants used the carbon and released oxygen. Clearing the air was foundational to everything else. Unlike Venus and Jupiter, earth has a clear atmosphere. Some will say to me that I'm imposing upon the text my world-view. My response: "Let's be honest. Who isn't?" Since I believe that the Bible is an accommodation of divine truth to the human mind, I conclude that God gave to Moses and Israel truths that they could understand. In doing so, He neither supported nor contradicted their scientific understandings. Amazingly, He put it in such a way that the account He gave doesn't conflict with our scientific understandings either. As has been pointed out, God did not tell man details. The fact is that He told man to "dominate" his environment; and his Father did not give him a silver spoon. God does not do for man what He has told him to do himself. God expects man to study, learn, and work to make his life better—the theme of Proverbs. Through what has been given, God is telling Israel that he made man and his dwelling place. He is not telling the Israelites, the original recipients of Genesis, everything and surely not details unknown to them. Today we still have more to learn than we know.

Now let's suppose that God were to tell Israel there are tubular animals at over a mile under the waters that live on methane and reproduce at temperature above boiling. Would that have been relevant and understood? Let's suppose that God were to reveal to Israel that in the seas there was/are plankton that clears the carbon out of the atmosphere and releases oxygen. Would that have made sense to them? All of the plant and animal categories mentioned in Genesis one are things known to Israel. In chapter one God does not address unfamiliar ground to those Israelite.

Let's continue in our assumptions. Let's say that God told Israel the earth was a celestial ball that travels around the sun in a galaxy full of stars and other solar systems. Would the words to do so have been available in biblical Hebrew? No, they were not. (No word for "earth", meaning a celestial ball, is found in biblical Hebrew.) Since 400 years after Christ scholars like Augustine scorned the Greeks for thinking the world was round, and since the Catholic Church a thousand years later expelled Nicolaus Copernicus and later Galileo for stating the same truth, what makes one think that men of Moses' day would not have done the same to Moses and his writings? God spoke truth within the context of the Hebrew culture 3,500 years ago, and *He did so accurately*. The text is accurate as far as it goes, though it does not address our twenty-first century scientific questions. This does not make Genesis wrong or a myth. It is truth written in the Hebrew language and culture of a people some 3,500 years ago, and it has never been irrelevant or proven inaccurate. That is a miracle, and it authenticates the divine inspiration of the text.

Returning to Genesis 1:1-2, in verse 2 the Hebrew can be legitimately translated using the English pluperfect, "had become" or "had been." This rendering of the verb changes the sense of the passage for readers of the KJV and most English translations. "Had become" is the preferred translation of those holding to the Gap Theory;⁶¹ and it is mine. Following the findings of Custance and Rogland, and bringing in the context, I have used the pluperfect for both lines of verse 2. I have translated this verse so that it communicates continuance of action in the past that came to completion. By doing so, the instantaneousness conveyed by our biased translations that use the simple past has been eliminated. The same is true for verse 16. Knowing that language and culture are married, I go beyond the Hebrew world view and that culture's standards of importance when translating (this is done by all translators of the Hebrew for land, when translating it "earth"). As best as possible in my translation, I have tried to adapt to our cultural standards and knowledge of the earth and universe without violating the original text. A translation should be relevant. It is our translations, shaped by the Vulgate and centuries of theological and world-view biases, that have caused the problems between Christians and science, not the original text.

The current renderings in our English versions follow a pattern going back over centuries, almost two millenniums when the influences of Clement, Origen, and Jerome are considered. That bias came out of a very dominant church that did everything possible to eliminate the Jewish aspect of the church and the Bible, from Christians like Augustine

⁶¹ See *Without Form and Void*, by Arthur C. Custance, © 1970, published by author; though I support the "had become" translation, such does not mandate a belief in a destroyed earth that is to be reconstructed.

who imposed his philosophical opinions upon that church and its theology, and from a church that rejected Nicolaus Copernicus because he stood firmly in proclaiming scientific truth that removed the earth from the center and placed the sun in the center of our solar system. Bible translations have biases that come from the biases of previous translators and centuries of church history that retained and dogmatically enforced those biases. *The honest seeker will admit that he can't be certain of the true sense of the Hebrew text in all cases; and he will be open to consider other possibilities.* He will admit that translating from one language to another always poses difficulties, some insurmountable. He will be humble and truthful.

The commands translated “and God said, ‘Let there be . . .’”, are the best we can do in translating from the Hebrew. They really aren't imperatives. Eugene Roop explains:

God speaks with power, but not the power of an autocratic monarch. *One must be careful not to draw too many conclusions from particular Hebrew verb forms.* Even so, the form of a verb does give us some interpretive clues. Grammatically, the verb form throughout this section is not imperative but *jussive*, a very mild, suggestive command for: *Let* there be, not *Be*. This command form is one we understand from our own language usage. The jussive has no exact counterpart in English. Jussive verb forms in Hebrew describe a broad range of declarations from the very strong (almost a command) to the very soft (almost a wish). Whether hard or gentle, the jussive always possesses a voluntary element. Our English translations try to pick up this voluntary element with the phrase *Let there be ...* [emphasis added]⁶²

In most commentaries when dividing the Creation Account into paragraphs or sections, the days are stressed. Daniel King points out in his paper, *The Days of Genesis One*,
Clearly, the meaning of Scripture as with any writing, has to do with *how it would have been perceived and understood by its original audience.* What any subsequent generation might force upon it, based upon its unique presuppositions and world-views, is a different matter altogether. Such things will change with the passing of the generations. But *the author's original intent ought to determine the meaning.*
[emphasis added]

A diligent effort to understand the culture at the time of the original text must be pursued in earnest. Care must be taken to avoid imposing our culture and world-view upon the text. One must decide, “Are the *days* or the *actions* the focus of the creation text or could it be something else?” My answer: The actions are central, and the six days are in low in significance. I understand that Tyndale divided the passage by the creative acts and not the days. The decision to focus upon the acts rather than the days has changed my entire understanding of the passage.

The ancient Hebrews wrote differently from the current western literature. *God's Book of Words* is literature at its best. Not only must we consider the language of the Bible, we must recognize and respect the literary tapestries used in Holy Writ.

⁶² Eugene F. Roop, *Genesis*, Believers church Bible commentary, 27 (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1987).

While ministering among the Nambiquara Indians in northwest Mato Grosso State, Brazil, I observed that they handled dialogue differently than we of the western world. The men would sit around, with the women in the background or not present at all, and a man visiting from another village would be given permission to address the group. He would begin by saying “I came to talk about,” stating his purpose. Time not being important, for an hour or more he would relate kinship news with details like deaths, births, marriages, etc.; and he’d tell about hunting experiences, garden news, and other news events. No one interrupted. He had the floor, so to speak. His talk went in a circle, and he eventually came back around to his original purpose statement. He would expand on that and explain it; then he would finish by saying, “that is what I had to say.” Though his purpose statement may have been his primary goal, he also came to relay the other items too and took a long time doing so. This was the way the Nambiquara Indians did it, and it had no relationship to our way of communicating.

The Scriptures are a God breathed Book that is a gathering together of some of the highest quality literature ever produced by man. Though in the Bible there are stories and topics that follow a linear, chronological pattern, there are many that do not.

When we look at Psalm 119 in the Hebrew, we are amazed to see 22 stanzas, one for each letter of the alphabet; and each stanza has eight lines or verses (Genesis one has eight creative acts). Each line in a stanza starts with the same letter. Imagine composing a poem in English following that design. There would be twenty-six sections, one for each letter of our alphabet, each containing eight lines, and each line therein starting with one of the letters used in writing English for that stanza or paragraph, all supporting one theme throughout the 26 sections. Talk about work!

Dr. David Dorsey, in his book, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, gives two reasons for it being difficult work to find the literary patterns in the ancient Hebrew text. The first is that because back then they did not write using paragraphs, punctuation, headings, graphic markings, etc.

The second difficulty in studying structure in the Hebrew Bible is that techniques were different from ours. For example, symmetry, parallelism, and structured repetition . . . appear throughout Old Testament literature; these and related patterns are so foreign to modern readers that it is easy to miss—or misunderstand—they. *To investigate structure in the Hebrew Bible, the reader must lay aside Western expectations and watch for these less familiar structuring conventions that were indigenous to ancient Israel—much like modern linguists must do when working with unwritten tribal languages.*⁶³ [emphasis added]

Dorsey’s book is thorough, with many practical guidelines. I recommend this book to serious Bible study advocates with a hunger to understand and learn the Old Testament.

⁶³ Dorsey, David A. in *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, © 1999, Pub. Baker Academic, page 16

Have we understood the Song of Solomon? Over the centuries many interpretations have been proposed, each with shortcomings. David Dorsey writes,⁶⁴

Does the book feature premarital sex? The discovery of the symmetric structure of the book probably answers this question. The poet has placed the wedding unit in its present position, not because the wedding represents the fourth scene in a chronologically arranged story, but because the unit stands at the highlighted center of the song's seven-part symmetry, serving as the poem's majestic centerpiece, with concentric circles radiating out from this center.

Though I have always felt the book was about marital love, the order of the book confused me until I learned that the Song of Songs is written in chiasmic symmetry. Dorsey's book and others⁶⁵ like it have opened my understanding as never before. In many cases the linear approach as used in our western literature has failed us and has led to misunderstandings and confusion that has impacted our interpretations for centuries. Thus, we have been stuck in ruts without any effort being made to see over the sides much less find a better way on level ground.

Do we really have a grasp of Ecclesiastes? Besides understanding that it is ancient philosophy, the book is written as a chiasmus, the center being Chapter 3:16 through 6:12, focusing the reader on the need to fear God. Chiasms focus on a central topic or theme and do not follow a time-line and a linear presentation.

Literary tapestries are in the New Testament as well. Matthew's genealogical record for the King leaves out names in order to have three sets of 14. This was acceptable in the Hebrew culture. Matthew, the Gospel to the Jew, does not present a linear record of events. The book is structured to communicate its theme to Jews: Jesus is the rejected Messiah and King. Matthew is written in a chiasmic form with chapter 13—the mystery form of the kingdom—being at the center.

John uses chiasms extensively. Ever wonder why the upper room discussion at the Lord's last Passover Seder seems jerky and repetitive? In John's Gospel, chapters 13 through 17 are written in a chiasm with 15:1-17 at the center.⁶⁶ Miss the structure, and one will fall short on the interpretation. Again, time-line reporting is not there. It was not necessary in the Hebrew culture when relating historical events.

Many of these patterns were systems used to assist memory. Others were done because that was what people did back then. We have our priorities and styles. They had theirs, and I've only touched enough on them to make a point.

The Nambiquaras had no clocks. They used the sun, moon, and stars. They were event and theme oriented, not time oriented. I am fully convinced that the culture of the people

⁶⁴ Dorsey, David A. in *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, © 1999, Pub. Baker Academic, page 42

⁶⁵ Another is *Biblical Text and Texture, A literary reading of selected texts*, by Michael Fishbane, © 1998, Pub. Oneworld Oxford

⁶⁶ See *The Literary Development of John 13-17, A Chiasmic Reading*, by Wayne Brouwer, © 2000, Pub. Society of Biblical Literature, Atlanta

of the Old Testament was not time sensitive. Placing events on a carefully observed time-line-chronology was not a priority. When theme and structure come first, time-line order can be skewed. Usually historical accuracy takes a back seat to literary structure. Events and topics were central in the Old Testament culture and literature. Literature was designed around themes and ease of memory. This observation should signal that Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 is literature first. Because it is so old, we may never fully grasp the weave of the tapestry, though efforts are being made to see correctly the picture that has been painted.

William D. Ramey in his work found on the site, InTheBeginning.org, titled: *Literary Analysis of Genesis 1:1—2:3*, has pointed out several literary styles in the Creation Account. Noting the emphasis on seven in the passage he has written:

The “Sevens” of Genesis 1:1—2:3

The correspondence of the first paragraph, Genesis 1:2 with 2:1-3, is underscored by the number of Hebrew words in both being multiples of seven. Genesis 1:1 consists of seven (7x1) Hebrew words, Genesis 1:2 consists of fourteen (7x2) words, and Genesis 2:1-3 thirty-five (7x5) words. In addition, “God” is mentioned thirty-five (7x5) times, “earth” occurs twenty-one (7x3) times, and “heaven/firmament” also twenty-one (7x3) times.

The number “seven” also dominates Genesis 1:1—2:3 in a startling way, not only in the number of words in a particular section, but also in the number of times a specific word or phrase recurs, which in all comprises the sevenfold patterning of this section:

Seven paragraphs: The arrangement of Genesis 1:1—2:3 consists of an introduction and seven paragraphs. The introduction identifies the Creator and creation (Gen. 1:1-2); six paragraphs corresponds to the six creation days (1:3-21). The seventh paragraph marks the climactic seventh day, the day of consecration (2:1-3).

The announcement of the commandment: “And God said”, while occurring ten times, is grouped into seven (7x1) groups (Gen. 1:3; 6; 1:9; 1:11; 1:14, 1:20; 1:24; 1:26, 28, 29).

The order formula: “Let there be . . .”, while occurring eight times, the formula is grouped into seven (Gen. 1:3; 1:6, 9; 1:11; 1:14; 1:20; 1:24; 1:26).

The fulfillment formula: “And it was so” occurs seven times (Gen. 1:3; 1:7; 1:9; 1:11; 1:15; 1:24; 1:30).

The execution formula: “And God made” occurs seven times (Gen. 1:4; 1:7; 1:12; 1:16; 1:21; 1:25; 1:27).

The approval formula: “God saw that it was good” occurs seven times (Gen. 1:4; 1:10; 1:12; 1:18; 1:21; 1:25; 1:31).

The subsequent divine word: God’s naming or blessing occurs seven times (Gen. 1:5; 1:8; 1:10; 1:22; 1:28).

Seven days affirmed: There are seven days mentioned (Gen. 1:5; 1:8; 1:13; 1:19; 1:23; 1:31; 2:2).

Although there are ten announcements of the divine word (#1 above) and eight commands actually cited (#2 above), the formulae are grouped in sevens. The intentional sevenfold patterning of Genesis 1:1—2:3 is only maintained by our author

skillfully and intentionally omitting some of these formulae: the fulfillment formula is omitted in Genesis 1:5 (Day 1), the description of the act in Genesis 1:9 (Day 3), and the approval formula in Genesis 1:6-8 (Day 2). Whereas in each case the Septuagint (LXX; the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures by seventy men) mistakenly adds the appropriate formula, these additions obscure the original sevenfold pattern of this section.

Seven is one of the major literary patterns in this passage. This is purposeful design, and by choosing to write a literary tapestry using seven in that design, the inspired author has deliberately deviated from giving us a record that places the emphasis in a strict time-line and event ordered record. (Genesis one does agree with what scientists are discovering written in *God's Book of Works*.)

Looking back in time, the purpose of the creation account is to tell Israel their beginning—God is their Father. It is my belief that Moses wrote the creation story after the giving of the Law. He composed the creation account stressing the importance of the seven-day week that concludes with the Sabbath rest—the *primary distinguishing mark of God's commissioned people*. Israel was to be a peculiar nation, distinctively different from the Gentile nations, a kingdom of priests to God for all ethnic groups; and dedicating one day in seven, the Sabbath rest, was one of the major distinctives that God laid upon them. They were to observe a Sabbath Day, a Sabbath Week, and a Sabbath Year. ⁶⁷

Several biblical scholars have observed that day-one finds its completion in day-four, day-two in day-five, and day-three in day-six. The first three days address spheres and the last three speak to the filling of each sphere. On days three and six, two different acts are recorded and their completion. On the other days there is one each. Seeing this apparent pattern caused my mind to spin. There is clearly a literary design here; and because there is a tapestry, that pattern indicates that the six days are not there to communicate that God created everything in 144 hours. Since God put them in the text, there is a reason; but it is not to tell us that He did all of His creation of the universe, our planet, and all living things including man and woman in just six days (24 hour day). In all of this, I'm not questioning God power, saying that He could not. Clearly He could. I am saying that all indications are that He did not do all of this in 144 hours. Both books agree.

When examining a phenomenon in a biblical text, there are two basic ways of looking at it. We can go through it linearly, following a historical line through time, called the *diachronic approach*; and/or we can look at it from a literary point of view, exempt from an historical line, called the *synchronic approach*.

Diachronic = from Greek meaning "across time". Pertaining to the study of language or a linguistic feature in a chronological or developmental scale; historical

⁶⁷ Not the subject of this paper, but 2nd Chronicles 36:21 (HCSB) "This fulfilled the word of the LORD through Jeremiah and the land enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation until 70 years were fulfilled," reveals that Israel had been disobedient to the Lord's Sabbath commands and had not been resting the land every seventh year.

Synchronic = concerned with the events or phenomena at a particular period without considering historical antecedents; the study of the linguistic figures at a given stage or time and not historically

The Framework school has presented some valid points. The evidences indicate that the synchronic method was the dominant approach used in telling the Genesis creation story. Genesis 1:1 through 2:3 is a tapestry. The up and down threads of the loom are the seven days, one picture. The horizontal threads going across that loom paint another picture of God at work as He relates His actions in creating a place for mankind. There is much more here than just the seven days. The text is a tapestry that paints one picture upon another. This may disturb some, but it was completely legitimate when written in the culture and with the people receiving Genesis 1.

Concerning the structure of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3, note the following graphic outline:

The Acts of Creation, Genesis 1:1–2:3 ⁶⁸

Preamble (1:1-2)	
a. God created the heavens and the land (earth).	
b. Land had become dark, formless; and God was hovering over it.	
Beginning	Completion
Act 1 – Light (3-5) – Day 1	Act 2 – Luminaries (14-19) – Day 4
Act 3 – Expanse (6-8) – Day 2	Act 4 – Fish and Birds (20-23) – Day 5
Act 5 – Land (9-10) and Act 7 – Vegetation – (11-13) – Day 3	Act 6 – Animals (24-26) and Act 8 – Man (27-31) – DAY 6
Epilogue (2:1-3)	
a. The creation of the heavens and the land were completed.	
b. God was finished with His work and rested (ceased) from it.	

William D. Ramey, in *Literary Analysis of Genesis 1:1—2:3*, makes some very enlightening observations:

The following parallel columns clearly indicate that the creation account is organized in two parallel groups of three In the first group, regions are created: night and day, firmament (and atmosphere) and oceans, and the land. In the second group, the corresponding inhabitants of these regions are created: astronomical bodies, birds and fish, land animals and man. This however, raises another perennial question: why are the plants created on Day 3 rather than on Day 6? The plants, we would think, should be grouped with the living beings rather than the earth. What classification criterion was the author using that put the plants even before the sun?

A clue to this comes from the peculiar description of the animals of dry land: “cattle and creeping things and beasts on the earth”. We can say that this phrase is intended as a synecdoche for all living land animals, but why select these as representatives? “Beasts of the earth” could refer to all land animals. Why then include cattle and

⁶⁸ Designed by Phillip D. Mosher

creepers? At first this does not seem to be much of a clue. Yet, look at the way our author summarizes this list of earth animals in Genesis 1:28: “every living thing that moves upon the earth”.

Our author clearly underscores the kind of locomotion which the animals have. He puts the birds in Day Five because they move in the air across the firmament. If we classify animals according to locomotion, then those animals that move on the earth can be subclassified into three types. There are cattle and the like which walk on top of it; there are the creepers and crawlers which slide along it; and finally there are “beasts of the earth” which dig through it (NB: the punishment of the serpent has to do with its manner of locomotion!).

Once we see this, then the reason the plants are consigned to Day 3 becomes obvious. They, unlike the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, the animals of the earth, and astronomical bodies, lack the capacity for locomotion. In that sense, they are “places”, rather than living beings.

Nonetheless, our author certainly recognizes that plants have something in common with the beings of Days 5 and 6, something which the astronomical bodies of Day 4 lack. The plants yield “seed according to their own kind”, much as the birds, fish, and land animals bring forth progeny according to their own kind. Hence we can see that Days 3 and 4 are, in a sense, a transition between the inanimate creation of Days 1 and 2, and the fully animate creation of Days 5 and 6. To be fully “alive” one must have capacity for both locomotion and reproduction.

Note carefully how Moses is careful to make sure that God Himself is fully alive according to the terms of the Creation Account! We first encounter God in motion—His Spirit moving across the face of the deep. The entire Creation Account can be read as the result of this motion. The creative motion of God has as its climax, a reproduction of Himself according to His own kind—humankind to rule over His creation, that is, human beings in His own image!

Moshe Kline (a Jew), in his work entitled, *A New Approach to Torah and Mishnah*, has developed a table of the Creation Account similar to mine above. Explaining his he writes:

The character of each individual day is a function of its place in the table, the intersection of its column and its row While the precise characteristics of the columns and rows can be argued, there is no denying that the table represents relationships inherent in the six-day structure of creation. This is an example of the non-linear reading of the Torah available through literary analysis. The linear text has been deconstructed into six components that have been rearranged in the table that demonstrates the conceptual underpinnings of creation. Since the same six days that require a non-linear reading are numbered serially by the text, we must conclude that

the Torah is two-faced by design, having both an exoteric,⁶⁹ linear, aspect, and a non-linear, esoteric,⁷⁰ aspect.

Kline Continues:

The interpretation could then continue in a more abstract vein and point out that the days of creation and their objects are not, in fact, the primordial elements of reality. They are logically preceded by a mesh of two types of principles, which might be called the "vertical" and "horizontal" principles, as indicated by the columns and rows of the table.

Both Ramey and Kline, and others I have not cited, find a structure here that goes beyond the commonly emphasized six days. Through focusing upon the six days, one is compelled to stress a linear rendering of the text; but there is a very strong non-linear picture here that should not be brushed aside and ignored.

In this creation account, Moses, a very well educated man with obvious literary skills that were used by the Holy Spirit, has painted a literary tapestry. It appears as though the seven days are the vertical threads in the loom and the eight creative actions are the horizontal threads. A tapestry makes much more sense than holding to just a plain linear reading.

Concluding Comments

Those six days are presented as having 24 hours each, forming a work week; but there is more to the literary design than the work week. We who are diachronic in our thinking, liking a time-line of events and accurateness in the timing structure, have difficulty with this approach. The original recipients were synchronic in their thinking and recording of events and were not time-line oriented. In presenting history, literary styles were more important in the culture of the Old Testament, just as it was with the Nambiquara Indians among whom we ministered. The outcome of the happenings were their major concern, not the when and the how.

Genesis 38, the story of Judah and Tamar, covers decades in time. Just where does it fit on the time-line? This chapter illustrates the fact that events, not time, are what is important to the recorder and recipient. There are many examples in Scripture where names are left out of a genealogical list; event ordering can be distorted; etc. This all fortifies the point that literary style often came before chronological accuracy in the recording of the story. This text on creation was originally designed for a culture that existed over 3,500 years ago. It was not designed to communicate within the context of our culture, at least not as we have been treating this passage. However, scientifically, the facts of this chapter are accurate. God saw to that.

⁶⁹ refers to knowledge that is outside of and independent from anyone's experience and can be ascertained by anyone. Compare Common sense, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exoteric>

⁷⁰ understood by or meant for only the select few who have special knowledge or interest; recondite: *poetry full of esoteric allusions, from*
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Esoteric>

It is the job of the spiritual leaders of our generation to accurately communicate what God said in a way that is understood in today's culture and dialect. With the creation story, I feel inadequate to meet that challenge and will admit that I do not know or fully understand the Genesis creation story. As much as possible, I have presented evidences, opinions, and my understanding of that record. I do not have all of the answers and believe that is not important. Knowing and believing that God is our Father by creation and that Jesus is God incarnate, knowing and believing that He died and rose again, knowing and believing that He is preparing a place for the redeemed and will come for them, and consciously acting on those facts to the point where we repent from our sins and appropriate through faith the gift of God in Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord are very important, for now and eternity.

I believe that *God's Book of Works* is not in conflict with *God's Book of Words*. The problem lies in the lap of the interpreter. Both books have the same Author, tell the truth, and agree. Though I question the Big Bang theory, I do accept the verifiable evidences that the *Book of Works* presents and continues to reveal to men who honestly seek for truth. A study of nature reveals a universe and our Planet with perhaps billions of years in age. This does not conflict with the Holy Scriptures as the Bible does not address age.⁷¹ I have no problem with time when reading Genesis one. I accept what honest scientists are presenting from their study of *God's Book of Works*. The evidences give testimony to the fact that the universe and our world are very old; and these evidences do not conflict with the Genesis record when properly analyzed and interpreted—a difficult task.

We are not going to cover chapter 2, but in that chapter we are told that God created man in His image, breathing into him the breath of life. God did not use an evolutionary process to create man. He is the direct creation of God, the peak of His creative acts. God gave man responsibilities. He was to name all of the animals, till the garden, and dominate his environment. Even in our computer age, these tasks would take a very long time. God found man lacking, caused him to sleep, took DNA from him, and made a helpmate for man, a mate to compliment and make him complete—a one flesh unit. I find it very difficult to believe that all that is recorded in chapter 2 transpired within a 24 hour span of time. God did not create them with a silver spoon in their mouths. Together they are to study, work, and dominate their environment. Sin has complicated man's life, but it has not destroyed him—yet.

Genesis 2:5, "Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground," is problematic for us. The verse probably reflects Genesis 1:2 and definitely shows that the Lord's goal was the creation of man.

⁷¹ On this subject I recommend: *A Biblical Case for an Old Earth*, by David Snoke.

Dr. Meredith G. Kline states, “The theology of the Sabbath is certainly central to the theology of Gen 1:1–2:3.”⁷² On day-seven the Bible tells us that God rested from His work. It is obvious that this does not mean He took a siesta. Jesus said, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”⁷³ God has never gone to sleep. He is overseeing His creation and holding it all in place. On day-seven God finished His creative acts—He ceased creating. Nowhere do we find the phrase “evening and morning” (meaning between the evenings) used to define that seventh day. Because it refers to the Creator, it would be inconsistent to restrict day-seven to 24 hours. It continues. This one fact should impact one’s interpretation of those six days with the “evening and morning” tag and should serve as an indicator that much more is in this record of creation, signaling that more is here than meets the eye in a rigid linear reading. Unlike God who exists outside of space and time, man is confined to 24-hour days. God intends for him to dedicate one day in seven to rest and meditation on spiritual matters.

Early on I mentioned four schools of interpretation of Genesis 1:1 through 2:3: the Young Earth Theory, the Day Age Theory, the Framework Theory, and the Gap Theory. Those in the Young Earth school, with their rigid linear approach, have completely missed the ship. If one will pay careful attention, he will find that some in the school will misquote science and distort facts rather than admit error.⁷⁴ I have not discussed the Day Age Theory; they too have gone too far by compromising the clear fact that those are 24-hour days. Under that point I included those who believe the six days were fiat days. By this is meant that the days are ordering and progressive creation days with long spans of time between them. This approach has hermeneutical weaknesses, as the text indicates 144 hours, a work week. We need to move away from interpreting this story linearly and move away from our western approach to literature.

I believe that there is merit in the Framework theory, though dogmatism would be wrong. The Gap Theory has merit as well, though I believe it is not an accurate interpretation. It is older than Darwin. Since its birth there has been much learned about the text, the culture at the time of writing, and our world; and time has cast shadows over the theory.

I believe Moses presented the Creation account in a tapestry. The seven-day-week is used to bring this story into the framework of man’s work week and to emphasize the Sabbath rest; but there is more in the text than the six-days of work. Moses wove into the tapestry eight creative acts. “In the beginning” is timeless; and neither are those eight acts bound to a linear timeline. Those acts are outside of the six-day timeframe though overlaid upon it.

⁷² In *Because It Had Not Rained*, Westminster Theological Journal Volume 20, 2, 145-57 (Philadelphia: Westminster Theological Seminary, 1957)

⁷³ *John* 5:17 (NASB-1995).

⁷⁴ On this subject I have recommended: *A New Look at an Old Earth*, by Don Stoner. Though this institution has done a lot in support of creation over evolution, it should be ashamed of its misquotes and false science used to misinform Christians, but also used to run scientists away from Christianity.

One has suggested that perhaps the days were how God revealed this on Mt. Sinai to Moses. The Lord took seven days to go through this with Moses as he wrote it down—a guess without facts.

To admit that we do not understand the details and to recognize that we are extremely distant from the original writing and culture is exegetically healthy. It is important to focus on the truths that this creation story gives us: the assurances that God created us and our dwelling place and that God made us in His image and cares for us! To these truths *God's Book of Works* and His *Book of Words* clearly testify. Beyond this and early on in the Scriptures, we are assured that He has also provided for our salvation and is creating a new heaven and earth that unlike this current world will be perfect and eternal. May it be soon!

Recommendations:

Christianity and the Age of the Earth, by Dr. Davis A. Young, pub. Artisan Sales, © 1988:
Dr. Young is a Christian geologist. His final chapter on interpreting the Bible and nature is excellent.

The books by Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, *How the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the Century Reveal God*, and *The Genesis Question*, Navpress. Dr. Ross is a Bible believing Christian with a PhD in astronomy. He believes the Big Bang is how God created the universe. I would be a fool to say, "He is wrong," because my knowledge of those sciences is limited, though I am not convinced that that is how God did it. In the first book he refutes the atheist and strongly presents the truth that where there is a beginning there must be a Beginner. The second is a thorough review of Genesis 1 and various theological views. You will not agree with all he writes—I don't; but this input is important if we wish to relate the truth to a lost world.

A New Look at an Old Earth, What the Creation Institutes Are Not Telling You About Genesis, by Don Stoner, Schroeder Publishing Co. Introducing this book by Don Stoner, on the back cover description Dr. Hugh Ross writes: "By acting ignorantly concerning the age of the earth, Christians have lost credibility in the scientific community. In this book, the major arguments from creation scientist literature asserting a young-earth Biblical interpretation are addressed in a simple & logical manner which will enable the reader to draw his own enlightened conclusions concerning the issue. This book should be read by all Christians, but especially by those interested in reconciling the Bible with scientific fact." With this I agree!

God's Time-Records in Ancient Sediments, by Dan Wonderly, Crystal Press, © 1977, though many scientific books become out of date, the data in this book will not. Printed copies are only available on the used book market.

A Biblical Case for an Old Earth, by David Snoke, © 2006, Baker Books, very good!

The Privileged Planet, by Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards, © 2004, Regnery Publishing, Inc.

The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution, Darwin's Black Box, by Michael J. Behe, Published in 1996 by Simon and Schuster

The Case for a Creator, by Lee Strobel, © 2004, Zondervan

These books have been available as used at amazon.com.

DVDs by Illustra Media, www.illustramedia.com:
The Privileged Planet and
Unlocking The Mystery of Life;
both are available at www.christianbook.com.

