

MODERN STUDIES OF THE GENESIS DAYS OF CREATION

FRAMEWORK VIEW

This is a historical but **non-sequential** reading of the events in Genesis One. It is set in a 2 panel framework of 6x24 hour days at the literal level of an Israelite's workweek, but taken as **analogical** of God's workweek. This view emphasizes the thematic/topical nature of the accounts. The sun is taken to have been created on Days 1 and 4. It understands that there is a Sabbath theology inherent in chapter one that would be a **pattern for Israelites only** because they were soon to be given the Sabbath law before entering the land of Canaan. There is no concept here that God had made Adam aware of a seven-day pattern.

ANALOGICAL/ANTHROPOMORPHIC DAYS VIEW

This treats Genesis as an exalted prose narrative of a storyline and is a historical and literal reading of the events **in chronological sequence**. God's creation week of indeterminate but finite time is viewed as analogous to an **Israelite workweek of 6x24-hour days**. The 2 panel framework is taken as a mnemonic. In Genesis 2 Moses' resumption-expansion technique is seen to be in effect and indicates that **God's actual workweek is not made up of 24-hour days**. This view is promoted by C. John Collins who calls it a *discourse-oriented literary* approach, and of the material creation views is taken here as most likely to be correct. The sun is taken to have been created before the beginning of the Days.

COSMIC TEMPLE INAUGURATION VIEW

This view does not bring modern scientific understanding into its explanation of Genesis One but recognizes that the ancient Israelites would have understood cosmology in just the same way as people of the ancient Near East. This ancient cosmology showed little interest in the material properties of the world but rather it was **role or function oriented** and so showing that no part of Genesis One concerns the creation of anything material, such having been completed before Genesis One begins. This view seems to present a better picture than any of the 'material creation' views.

1. THE FRAMEWORK VIEW

THIS VIEW PROPOSES:

- That Genesis One and Two are a single creation account with 1:1-2:4a being the first pericope (passage) and 2:4b-25 being the second, which expands upon details in the first.
- That Moses presents as the first pericope a historical *prose narrative of literal events* set within a **figurative framework** of a seven-day week.
- That Moses presents as the second pericope a historical *prose narrative of literal events*.
- That the account does not give any basis for belief in either a recent earth of between 6,000 and 10,000 years old or of an ancient earth of 4.5 billion years old i.e. it is not *concordist* so that there is no attempt to match either modern scientific understanding to the account or the reverse.
- That Genesis 1:1 shows that the material *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) of the sun, moon, stars and planet earth was **before the 6 Days began**.
- That Genesis 1:2 concerns planet earth as unproductive, uninhabited and in darkness, yet now covered with **an ocean** before the 6 "days" begin.

- That Genesis 1:3-31 concerns God’s creative week to bring the earth into a condition whereby it is no longer ‘**an unproductive and uninhabited place.**’ From this point onward it is viewed from the perspective of the spirit of God as noted in verse 2.
- That the six Days are the **literal 24-hour days** of an Israelite’s workweek as an arrangement further refining the **rhythm of human activities - a pattern for Israelites** to follow as their workweek. Unlike days, months and years which are regulated by physical systems, the concept of a 7-day week comes only from divine revelation (although it is divided by 4 phases of a month).
- That the “**evening and morning**” refrain simply marks the end points of the night-time, thereby focussing our attention on the workday. The fact that this refrain is missing from ‘Day Seven’ indicates that it is not a normal day.
- That the total picture of God’s completing of His work is not of a literal 144 hour week of days. So the “days” have been used by Moses **analogically** of God’s creation week. The analogical aspect treats each *Day* as **meaning 24 hours** but **referring to God’s creation workweek of indeterminate time.**
- That **anthropomorphic language** about God, especially His rest, indicates that He is not subject to human time scale and so is not restricted to 24 hour days.
- That the Genesis One account consists of **2 themes – forming and filling**, and **3 topics** with Days 1&4; 2&5 or 3&6 being parallel so that combined the references are to:
 - Light and its sources.
 - Sky and waters being filled with birds and sea creatures.
 - Land being filled with animals and man, as well as vegetation for them.

These **topics** all have reasonably defined boundaries in the Genesis account. Presentation by topics is a very common literary technique throughout the Scriptures e.g. Ezra 4:1-24.

- That the Days are **not chronological/sequential** because their parallelism means that they form a framework which destroys any sequence.
- That the Hebrew stylistic literary technique of **synoptic/resumption-expansion** is used by the author of Genesis. This means that basic statements are often repeated and more detail is added. This demonstrates the **natural means** used by God which show that the time such processes would take were more than could be accomplished within 12 hours. Again these facts indicate that the 6x24-hour pattern is analogous of God’s workweek of indeterminate time. Please see the later section on Genesis 2:4-25 which demonstrates the expansions in Genesis 2 of the synoptic statements in Genesis 1 and within itself.
- That Genesis 2:2, 3 shows the 7th “**day,**” in relation to God’s work of creation, as being of **indeterminate and infinite length.** Later Scriptures demonstrate that His 7th day continues. This indicates that the 7x24-hour Days framework is only analogous of God’s workweek and rest.
- That the **toledot** in Genesis 2:4 acts as a hinge with 2:4a looking back to 1:1 and 2:4b introducing the events of 2:5 to 4:26.
- That because **Genesis 2:4-25** is the *second pericope* of the **same single creation account**, one must take its context into account because the events take longer than 24 hours. This makes it evident that the Genesis One days of God’s work therefore take longer than 24 hours. So it is primarily in Genesis 2 that we see evidence that the reality of God’s creative work-week cannot have been a literal 144 hours.

- That the events in Genesis 2:7-25 are an expansion of those of **Days three and six**.
- That Days 1 and 4 together present the actual time when the **sun, moon and stars were created**.
- That one must take into account the many **other creation accounts** or statements in the rest of the Scriptures and their genre. In the reflections on creation found in Job, Psalms, and Isaiah there is **no reference to any “days” of creation**. The only Scriptures containing such a reference are Proverbs 8:27-31 which speaks of ‘days’ as part of a **metaphorical, poetic meditation** and contemplates creation over many days. Also Exodus 20:11; 31:17 which is commented on in the previous study.

As an example of how each *Day* is treated as **meaning 24 hours** but **referring to God’s creation workweek** please note that in the sentence: “I just saw Abigail’s mother [Sandra]” the word mother has a meaning concerning the relationship between any female parent and her child[ren]; yet in the context of the above sentence the word *mother* is restricted to a specific person, namely Sandra, Abigail’s mother. Similarly, the word *Day* **always literally means 24 hours**, but in certain contexts it is used analogically and therefore **refers to** a period longer than 24 hours. The context of Genesis chapters one and two shows that the days that **mean 24 hours** have been **used analogically** and therefore **refer to God’s creation days** which must be longer than 24 hours each and that God’s entire creation week is only analogous to an Israelite’s work week but does not have a one to one correspondence.

REASONS THAT THE DAYS MEAN 24-HOUR DAYS FOR AN ISRAELITE’S WORKWEEK

Please see under EXEGETICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE DAY/AGE VIEW in the previous study.

FACTORS INDICATING THAT THE DAYS MUST BE ANALOGICAL FOR GOD’S WORKWEEK

The exegetical failure of Young Earth creationism in treating each “*day*” as **meaning 24 hours** and **referring to 24 hours** leads to the Analogical View that we should treat each *Day* as **meaning 24 hours** but **referring to God’s creation workweek** which is demonstrated by the earlier facts showing that 24-hour days are not being referred to as regards God’s creative work. Please see under EXEGETICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE 24-HOUR DAYS AS REFERRING TO CREATION BY GOD WITHIN 144 HOURS in the previous study.

THE PARALLELS OF THE DAYS

In Genesis 1 there is clearly a literary pattern concerning **the parallels of the days** consisting of **2 themes** and **3 topics**. These **topics** all have reasonably defined boundaries in the Genesis account.

SYNOPSIS/RESUMPTION/EXPANSION

This Hebrew stylistic literary technique means that any basic statement is repeated and more detail is added. It was used by Moses at times in the first two chapters thus indicating that the time taken during the 6th Day for the creating of Adam and Eve took much longer than 24 hours as will be seen later.

AN OPEN-ENDED SEVENTH DAY

There are factors about the 7th day which leave it open-ended and which indicate the analogical feature of Genesis One whereby God’s completing of His work in a week of days is **analogous to the literal 24-hour days** of an Israelite’s workweek:

1. God’s ‘rest day’ does not close with the usual refrain: “There was evening and there was morning” as is common to the other ‘days.’ This indicates that it may not be completed as a day of cessation from the creation of the world.

2. Inasmuch as “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he ceased all the work that he had been doing in creation” (Gen. 2:3) it indicates that it may be very different from the 6 days.

3. As with the Scriptural usage of anthropomorphisms to explain the ways and activities of God, so too the concept of a rest day for God is **anthropomorphic**. The Scriptures make it plain that God does not need to rest. And yet:

❖ “...on the seventh day He ceased from labour, and was **refreshed** (Lit. caught His breath).”
(Ex. 31:17).

This is evidently anthropomorphic which moves us away from the idea of a literal 24-hour 7th Day.

4. God said: “For forty years I loathed that generation, I swore in my anger, truly they shall not enter into **my rest**” (Ps. 95:10, 11).

Centuries later the writer to the Hebrews stated:

❖ “Let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering **His rest**, any one of you may seem to have come short of it...For we who believed **enter that rest**...although **His works were finished from the foundation of the world**...since **it remains for some to enter into it**...For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that...For *the one who has entered into His rest* has himself also **rested** from his own works, as God did from His” (Heb. 4:1-11).

If the reference was to a literal 24-hour 7th day then God might have long ago, on each eighth day, restarted His work *with regard to the world* and there would have been thousands of God’s 144-hour weeks of creation including thousands of single rest days. Yet there is no evidence of any such new work.

5. If the seventh day was only to be 24 hours long the ‘Sabbath resting’ mentioned in Hebrews 4:9,10 would have no meaning for Christians. Yet it says:

❖ “So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has **entered His rest** has himself also rested from his own works, as God did from His.”

6. “The Jews were persecuting him [*Jesus*] because he was doing these things **on a Sabbath**. But he answered them ‘My Father is working **until now**, and I myself am working’” (John 5:16, 17).

So Jesus is saying that God did not cease work in absolute terms on the seventh day. Rather he declared that for God the seventh day was not a cessation from all activity but of a change from bringing the world into good order. He stated that His Father keeps working even though this very time was part of His seventh day of cessation “**until now**.” God has ceased from *creating* everything but not from maintaining the universe and doing good toward His creatures— acts of mercy etc.

THE THREE TOPICS OF EARTH’S DEVELOPMENT

Topic 1: (Days 1 and 4): Light and darkness; sun, moon and stars. Light interrupts the darkness because the sun, moon and stars are created and become time markers.

Topic 2: (Days 2 and 5): Sky and waters; birds and sea creatures. The sky (*expanse*) is created when the upper waters are formed for the purpose of producing rain (Proverbs 3:20). The oceans and sky are filled with creatures.

Topic 3: (Days 3 and 6): Land and vegetation; land animals and mankind. The lower waters are gathered to allow dry land to appear and earth sprouts plants and fruit trees. The land is filled with creatures.

THE TWO THEMES COMBINED WITH THE THREE TOPICS

Theme 1: Forming/separating
Concerns the KINGDOMS of:

- 1) Light and darkness.
- 2) Sky and waters.
- 3) Land and vegetation (plants/trees).

Theme 2: Filling the void
Concerns the GOVERNORS of those kingdoms:

- 4) Sun/moon/stars as sources of light.
- 5) Birds and sea creatures.
- 6) Land animals and man.

THE PARALLELS

The Framework view explains the six “days” as resuming and expanding with more details added to the Genesis 1:1, 2 synopsis:

Day 1 (Fiat 1) and □ resumption/expansion in:

“...and there was **light**...

God *separated light from darkness.*”

Day 4 (Fiat 5)

“God made the two great **lights**...to **rule** the day and night; the stars also.

God placed them in the expanse...to *separate the light from the darkness.*”

Day 2 (Fiat 2) and □ resumption/expansion in:

“God made the expanse [**sky** –not a canopy] separated the **waters.**”

Day 5 (Fiat 6)

“God created...every living **creature** with and which waters swarmed and every **bird.**”

Day 3 (Fiats 3&4) and □ resumption/expansion in:

“...let the dry **land** appear”

(i.e. separated from the sea).

...let the earth sprout...seed-bearing plants/fruit trees”

Day 6 (Fiats 7&8)

“God made the **beasts** of the earth...
God created **man.**”

There are 8 **fiats** or creative commands i.e. “*then God said, ‘Let...’*” each one followed by an action i.e. “*and it was so,*” or “*and God made...*” The parallels seem evident in the 1-1-2 pattern of the fiats, there being 2 fiats each on Days 3 and 6. The parallel is also seen in the last fiat of each of Days 3 and 6, namely seed-bearing plants/fruit trees and mankind whose dependency on this vegetation is described in Genesis 2. So Day 4 supposedly resumes then expands upon the synoptic description of the appearance of light on Day 1 by adding the detail of the light sources being “*to separate the day from the night*” and “*for signs and for seasons.*” This is the pattern followed whereby the restating of the Day 2 events is supposedly expanded with the crucial details of the creation of sea creatures and birds on Day 5; and that because now land had appeared on Day 3 the creation of land animals/mankind is possible on Day 6.

THE “TOLEDOTS” ARE INTRODUCTIONS

- ❖ “These are the generations (account/history - Heb. *toledot*) of the heavens and the earth when they were **created**, in the day that the LORD God **made** the earth and the heavens” (*Gen. 2:4*).

The structure of Genesis is based on the 11 *toledot* statements. These act as introductions to the passages that follow. However, if we take Genesis 1:1 as a statement of introduction to the 6 “days” then there are 12 toledots in making a literary pattern for the whole of Genesis. They function like a zoom lens as well as acting **as a hinge** connecting back to the previous passage as evidenced in 2:4. So 2:4a reflects back to the passage from 1:1 to 2:3. Then 2:4b introduces the new divine name, “Yahweh God,” which points forward to events in 2:5-3:24.

GENESIS 2 - THE SOLUTION TO THE UNCULTIVATED LAND

Long after the waters had gathered so that the dry (but obviously very wet at first) land first appeared (1:9) we are given a picture in 2:5 of arid land in which no vegetation was able to grow. The *wild vegetation* (Heb. *siah-hassadeh*) grows spontaneously **after the onset of the rainy season**. This is therefore desert vegetation, whereas *cultivated grain* (Heb. *eseb-hassadeh*) such as flax, barley, wheat or spelt requires a cultivator – humans who would work the soil and provide irrigation. Both types of vegetation require rain for their germination and growth. So Genesis 2:5 resumes and expands the statements about Day 3b showing that rain was the cause of the growth mentioned on Day 3b. Genesis 2:5 also brings together the parallelism of Days 3b and 6b by showing the essential connection between the vegetation and man. It further shows that **natural means** were used by God to bring about this situation first noted in 1:11-13 (Day 3b) and 1:26, 27 (Day 6b). This situation is what would typically occur at the end of a long hot summer and before the autumn and winter rains had yet come. So the two-part problem presented is followed by the two part solution of rain and then a cultivator.

THE RAINY SEASON BEGINS

The problem of no *wild vegetation* and no *cultivated grain* has been presented to be followed by the two part solution of rain and then a cultivator. The deficiency of no rain is dealt with in:

- ❖ “But a mist [Heb. *ed* = rain-cloud] used [“*began*” *conceptually the inceptive sense is required*] to rise (*appearing on the horizon*) from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground”
(Gen. 2:6).

The rare word *ed* is sometimes inaccurately rendered as “stream” and by a study of languages related to Hebrew, it has been proposed that this word should be translated “**rain-cloud**.” Such a *rain-cloud* was not an existing alternative water supply. Otherwise there would have been shrubs [*wild vegetation*] and plants [*cultivated grain*]. Furthermore, the phrase ‘used to rise’ should be translated as “**began to rise**.” This gives the more logical translation of verse 6 as:

- ❖ “...and a *rain-cloud began* going up (*appearing on the horizon*) from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground - then the LORD **God formed the man**”

RIVERS NEED PRECIPITATION

- ❖ “Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became **four rivers**” (Gen. 2:10).

This is further proof that it rained in Adam’s time because rivers are unsustainable without precipitation. Also mist alone could not create the necessary water-cycle. Therefore, **the water cycle** began before Adam came into existence (Job 28:26, 36:27-30; 37:13; 38:25; Ps.104:3-6; 148:4-8; and Proverbs 3:20; 8:28). Yet advanced life can survive only if the evaporation and precipitation have an average of between 25 and 60 liquid inches per year, and only if snow and rain condense in the right proportions. The second deficiency of having no man to cultivate the ground was then dealt with in 2:7, 8 and 15.

EARTH’S PREPARATION COMPLETED

- The total darkness removed.
- Water cycle begins.
- Dry land appears/vegetation grows.
- Sun/moon function now as time markers/body-clock regulators.
- Great sea monsters created/gliding creatures and birds created.
- Three types of land animals created/mankind created.

Because the Bible does not give a strictly scientific account of creation, the above chronology allows for the fact that there may have been small creatures in the sea even before Day One began and certainly before the land rose. Also, because the creation of only three types of land animals are described on Day 6, many other animals that required no body-clock regulation may have existed from Day Three.

EXEGETICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE FRAMEWORK VIEW

GENESIS ONE IS CHRONOLOGICAL

Although a certain symmetry of Days 1&4; 2&5; and 3&6 is clearly in the texts it should not be used in a way that breaks the clear chronological presentation of Genesis 1 of six **numbered** days which complete the physical creation and the seventh which is a rest day. Numbered Days must mean that they are sequential.

THERE ARE SIX CREATIVE DAYS RATHER THAN THREE

The Framework view presents the parallels of the days as representing different aspects of the same event and so implying that there were really only 3 of God's creative days. If God had worked for only three actual Days it would be confusing to Israelites when He then presents them with a six day workweek as the pattern for them to follow.

THE SUN WAS NOT CREATED ON DAY 1 and 4

The Framework view explains the time of the sun's creation as being on Day 1/Day 4; yet Genesis 1:2 presents a picture of the earth with its ocean as existing before Day 1 begins. However, without the existence of the sun (Gen. 1:1), the earth could not exist.

THE PARALLELISM IS NOT EXACT

1. The "expanse" should have been *formed* on Day 1 for it to match its being *filled* on Day 4. However, the expanse was formed on Day 2 and so destroying the supposed parallelism.
2. The sea came into existence before the Days began (Gen.1:2) and not on Day 2. Again this fact destroys the *forming and filling* pattern and therefore the supposed parallelism with Day 5.
3. Some have counted not 8 fiats (creative/forming acts) as in the Framework View, but 13.

IT DOES NOT CONCERN THE MATERIAL CREATION

- This view assumes, as with all previous views, that Genesis 1:1 is about the material creation; whereas it is a summary statement concerning God's bringing everything into an ordered system i.e. as now functioning
- Rather than being about material creation the six days concern God's appointing of vegetation, birds, sea creatures, land animals, and mankind to their functions in an ordered system.

Although the Framework View has a great deal to commend it, the Analogical Days Approach proposed by C. John Collins seems best of all the material creation views. In any of the ancient creation views described here biological macro-evolution is not being proposed.

2. THE ANALOGICAL DAYS VIEW

This view holds a great deal in common with the Framework View. However,

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE FRAMEWORK VIEW ARE:

- That God's creation Days are broadly sequentially **chronological**, so that there are actually **6** of God's days of creation – all following one after the other.
- That although the Genesis One account does point to a **2 theme framework of 3 topics of 2 themes – forming and filling**, and **3 topics** with Days 1&4; 2&5 or 3&6 being approximately parallel; yet the parallels partially break down when examined in depth i.e. when it is noted that the sun and the earth with an ocean were actually created before the 6 days began. However, this framework may act simply as a **memory aid**, but not detracting from the actual chronological sequence of God's Days of creation.
- That Days 1 and 4 together do not present the actual time when the **sun, moon and stars were created**.

OTHER DIFFERENCES WITH THE FRAMEWORK VIEW ARE:

- That Moses presents a historical, **literal exalted prose narrative of a storyline** set within a figurative framework of a seven-day week. This is called a *discourse-oriented literary approach*.
- That after Genesis 1:3 all references to “heaven” concern *the sky* and all references to “the earth” concern *the land (ground)*.
- That each day of creation carries with it references to the creative accomplishments of the earlier days. When God saw that it was good, he was **viewing the accumulated works** of all his previous activities.
- That Genesis 2:2, 3 shows the **7th day**, in relation to God's work of creation, as being of **indeterminate but finite length**, rather than ‘infinite length’ as in the Framework view.
- That the events in Genesis 2:7-25 are those of only **Day six** rather than Days 3 and 6.

REASONS FOR CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE IN GENESIS ONE

- a. In contrast to Genesis Two, chapter 1 makes extensive use of **chronological markers** indicating the logic of the “days” as being sequential:
 - The “days” are numbered as indicating sequence.
 - The “evening/morning” refrain is for six consecutive days and not for 3.
 - The phrases “God said,” “God saw,” “God blessed,” “God called” indicate sequence.
 - Transitional terms such as “then” and “now” indicate chronology.
- b. There is a **logical dependency** of each event upon the previous one. This implies a chronological sequence e.g. the growing of vegetation is obviously dependent on sufficient light reaching earth's surface and the raising of the landmass first. The existence of many of the land animals is dependent on the growth of vegetation and making the sun and moon visible for the regulating of their body clocks.
- c. The **Work-Rest pattern** is that of work first then rest during the “night” then work the next day etc and finally ceasing from work at the end of Day 6. This does not fit with the Framework concept that amounts to only 3 days.

- d. The *wayyiqtol* verb (improperly called ‘the *waw-consecutive* with imperfect’) concerns the use of the Hebrew word for “*and*” followed by the past tense verb. When this occurs it **indicates a sequence of events**, although not always. The first of these occurs in verse 3 followed by a *wayyiqtol* at the beginning of each of the other “days.”

ON DAY 4 “AND GOD **MADE** THE TWO GREAT LIGHTS AND THE STARS”

THE WORD ASAH = “MADE”

This occurs just 4 times in Genesis 1 and does not mean the same as *bara* (create something new) so that in context *asah* may not always mean ‘to make’ in the sense of creating. *Asah* also has the meaning of ‘to do,’ ‘to complete’ or ‘to prepare’ according to context.

DEGREES OF VISIBILITY OF LIGHT

In verse 3 God, on Day 1, says “*Let there be light, and there was light. And God separated the light from the darkness.*” This is in reference to **an operation to remove the total darkness** and not to the unique creation of light (1:1). Yet the sun and moon are still not visible from the point of view of the “hovering spirit.” Such visibility occurs on Day 4 as described in verse 14: “*Let there be lights in the expanse...to give light upon the earth.*” There is a fourfold presentation of these functions in a chiasm:

- A **to separate** (verse 14a)
- B **to be signs** (verse 14b)
- C **to give light on the earth** (verse 15)
- D **to govern** (verse 16)
- C1 **to give light on the earth** (verse 17)
- B1 **to govern** (verse 18a)
- A1 **to separate** (verse 18b)

This chiasm emphasizes the sun, moon and stars as now beginning to function as governors of the rhythm of life. This stage needed to be accomplished before creatures were created which must operate according to a body clock. Therefore this must be some further enhancement of the effect of these lights on our planet so that the sun and moon are now visible in the sky. Nothing requires or indicates that the actual making of the sun, the moon “...*and the stars*” took place within the fourth creative “yom.” Hence, in verses 14-18, God assigns specific **functions** to the already created lights so that they become **governing signs** for days, months, years and seasons.

GENESIS 2:4-25 - RESUMPTION/EXPANSION OF DAY SIX

The details of Genesis 2:4-24, in expanding on the events of Day six, show the impossibility of those events as having taken place within 24 hours because natural processes are described as being in operation. Genesis 2:7 resumes and expands the topic of man’s creation which synopsis had been given at the end of Day 6 in 1:26, 27 now showing that man was created of the dust of the previously arid land, after it was watered but before there was a Garden in Eden.

NOTE: The garden was planted in the land of Eden which was a land in the east (2:8 NJB). Therefore only a part of Eden was paradise. Adam was created outside of the garden (2:7, 8, 15) in a previously arid land (2:5, 6). After his sin, “*God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken*” (3:23). This is the land that was cursed and grew “thorns and thistles.”

- Genesis 2:15 resumes/expands the events of 2:8, 9 showing that the man newly placed in the garden was to work.

- Genesis 2:16-18 gives further resumption/expansion showing what would happen if Adam ate “from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”
- Genesis 2:19 resumes/expands the topic of the animal creation at the earlier part of Day 6 showing the inter-relationship with man before woman was created.

SUMMARIZING THE CREATION SEQUENCE

1:1: Creation out of nothing of the entire universe up to the point of the existence of light, the sun/moon/stars, and with planet earth in a barren state having no ocean.

1:2: The unproductive/uninhabited earth now is in total darkness and fully covered by ocean in preparation for limited light, a water cycle and the raising of the land so that will be made habitable for plant and tree life and other life forms.

1:3-5: Day 1 - The already created light is allowed to penetrate to earth’s atmosphere in preparation for “the land to sprout vegetation” and other primitive essential life forms (symbiosis).

1:6-8: Day 2 - The making of the expanse [*sky*] by separating the waters so that the water cycle can begin as further preparation for plant and tree life. From verse 8 the word *heaven* now narrows to *sky*.

1:9, 10: Day 3a – The single land mass [*Pangea*] appears out of the single ocean. God declares everything as good. From verse 10 the word *earth* now narrows to *land*.

1:11-13: Day 3b - Land vegetation and trees are brought forth by the dry earth.

1:14-19: Day 4 - Enhancement of the effect of the lights so that the sun, the moon and the stars are visible from the earth’s surface. This is in preparation for the creation of the first *nephesh*, the later *nephesh* and finally the first of those made in God’s image.

1:20-23: Day 5 – The creation of the first living souls (Heb. *nephesh*). The “great sea creatures” fill the ocean and “every winged bird” fills the skies.

1:24, 25: Day 6a – The making of 3 kinds of land animal: The wild, the domestic, and the creeping animals. God declares it good. This implies that other creatures e.g. dinosaurs were created at a different and earlier time.

1:26, 31: Day 6b – God creates mankind – male and female – in His image. God instructs them regarding the subduing of the earth and domination over all other creatures on earth.

OBJECTION

How did various creatures survive during these *days* until the next *day* provided what they would need for survival?

REPLY

Although these seven days are expressed as discrete periods, in **the creation reality** there would have been some overlapping so that all these interdependent factors would interact with one another; hence the work of each day carries over to the next. This is noted by the fact that God does not evaluate His Day 2 acts because they are not completed until Day 3. The “goodness” declarations do not, in fact, correspond to the seven days. For instance, two declarations are made on both days 3 and 6 showing that other literary elements are at work in the account as well as the seven days structure.

EXEGETICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE ANALOGICAL DAYS VIEW

1. This view assumes, as with all previous views, that Genesis 1:1 is about the material creation; whereas it is a summary statement concerning God's bringing everything into an ordered system i.e. as now functioning.
2. Rather than being about material creation the six days concern God's appointing of vegetation, birds, sea creatures, land animals, and mankind to their functions in an ordered system.

3. THE COSMIC TEMPLE INAUGURATION VIEW

This view was first presented in 2001 in by John H. Walton professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College and restated in his 2009 book *The Lost World of Genesis One*.

THIS VIEW PROPOSES:

- That Moses presents a historical, literal account in ordinary prose.
- That Genesis One and Two are a single creation account with 1:1-2:4a being the first pericope (passage) and 2:4b-25 being the second, which expands upon details in the first.
- That the account does not give any basis for belief in either a recent earth of between 6,000 and 10,000 years or an ancient earth of 4.5 billion years i.e. there is no attempt to match either modern scientific understanding to the account or the reverse.
- That the cultural context is functional according to **ancient Near Eastern literature**, so that Israel was given no extraordinary revelations concerning the scientific understanding of the material origins of the world i.e. this is "old-world science" of the time.
- That Israel differed with its neighbouring nations concerning:
 1. The nature of God
 2. The role of humanity.
 3. Ethics.
 4. The worship of God
- That Moses had the same **ancient cosmology** as the surrounding nations as demonstrated by the biblical vocabulary.
- That the earth was viewed by Moses as a flat disc and the sky as a solid dome.
- That the Hebrew mindset concerned itself with **functions** rather than material substance.
- That this cosmology was role or **function oriented** as with other ancient cosmologies.
- That the nature of the governing verb (Heb. *bara* "create") is functional; rather than meaning 'to create materially,' so that "create the role of" is an appropriate meaning.
- That *bara* occurs just 4 times in the first pericope of Genesis 1:1-2:4a and is used with reference to God's functional creating of something completely unique:
 - 1:1 and 2:4a – appointing the stars, sun, moon and earth to their functions.
 - 1:21 – Day 5 - appointing the sea creatures and birds to their functions.
 - 1:27 - Day 6 – appointing land animals and mankind to their functions.

- That in the context of the meaning of *bara* the Hebrew word *asa* concerns ‘making’ in the sense of ‘putting in order or **arranging**’.
- That the failure of Genesis One to mention materials is taken to mean that everything was “created functionally” rather than meaning that everything was created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) and therefore material creation was before the Genesis 1:1 ff story **began**.
- That, based on the biblical usage of *bara*, **Genesis 1:1** does not concern the creation of the material universe, but is **a summarizing introduction** to the seven Days which concern the bringing of the world into an ordered state i.e. appointing the stars, sun, moon and earth to their functions.
- That the phrase “heavens and earth” is a **merism** indicating a totality i.e. the entire cosmos.
- That **Genesis 1:2** begins the story in describing the non-functional earth i.e. as unproductive, uninhabited and with darkness over the **ocean**.
- That after Gen. 1:2 all references to “heaven” concern *the sky* and all references to “the earth” concern *the land (ground)*.
- That ‘**Days 1 to 6**’ in Genesis 1:3-31 concern God’s creative week of work in the progressive development to bring the land into a condition whereby it is no longer ‘**an unproductive and uninhabited place**’ but rather an ordered and fully functional world. From this point on it is viewed from the perspective of the spirit of God as noted in verse 2.
- That the six “days” are **literal 24-hour days**.
- That the six “days” concern God’s appointing of vegetation, birds, sea creatures, land animals, and mankind to their functions in an ordered system.
- That the six “days” are paralleled 1&4, 2&5, 3&6 as demonstrated in the Framework View
- That of the six “days”, three do not concern things which are material (Days 1, 3 and 7). Although Days 2, 4, 5 and 6 have material components the passages explicitly deal with them in their various roles i.e. functionally.
- That the interest in the dome (Heb. *raqia*), although materially solid, is functional for regulating the precipitation.
- That God on the Seventh Day entered His cosmic temple (the universe) and remains there until the creation of New Heavens and Earth or permanently.
- That the *toledot* in Genesis 2:4 acts as a hinge with 2:4a looking back to 1:1 and 2:4b introducing the events of 2:5 to 4:26.

THE BASIS FOR THE COSMIC TEMPLE INAUGURATION VIEW

AN ANCIENT COSMOLOGY

In *The Lost World of Genesis One* Walton explains that:

Our first proposition is that Genesis 1 is ancient cosmology. That is, it does not attempt to describe cosmology in modern terms or address modern questions. The Israelites received no revelation to update or modify their “scientific” understanding of the cosmos. They did not know that the stars were suns; they did not know that the earth was spherical and moving through space; they did not know that the sun was much further away than the moon, or even further than the birds flying in the air. They believed that the sky was material (not

vaporous) solid enough to support the residence of deity as well as to hold back waters. In these ways, and many others, they thought about the cosmos the same way that anyone in the ancient world thought, and not at all like anyone thinks today. And God did not think it important to revise their thinking, p. 16.

‘The Cosmic Temple Inauguration View’ is in contrast to the Young Earth Creationism (Y.E.C) and Day/Age views which are ‘*concordist*’ inasmuch as the former attempts to change modern science to match the Y.E.C understanding of the Genesis description, and the latter—the Day/Age view attempts to harmonize the Genesis record to match much of modern science. However, over the centuries scientific understanding has steadily changed and will continue to change. In fact, man’s understanding of the size of the cosmos (universe) has changed from time to time, including such changes in relatively recent times. For instance, until certain discoveries in the 1920’s it was widely believed that the Milky Way galaxy was the entire universe. Nowadays it is known that the universe contains at least some 200 billion galaxies. So if God were to have given Moses a full scientific explanation of the universe it would have had to be considerably in advance of even modern-day understanding. Yet such an understanding would have been incomprehensible to the ancient Israelites as well as to people of only several centuries ago. For the above reasons ‘the Cosmic Temple Inauguration View’ does not bring modern scientific understanding into its explanation of Genesis or indeed into any of the Hebrew Scriptures.

ANCIENT COSMOLOGY IS ROLE OR FUNCTION ORIENTED

The ancient cosmology of the pagan nations showed little interest in the material properties of the world but rather they believed:

That something existed...by virtue of its having a function in an ordered system. Here I refer not to an ordered system in scientific terms, but an ordered system in human terms, that is in relation to society and culture. In this sort of functional ontology, the sun does not exist by virtue of its material properties, or even by its function as a burning ball of gas. Rather it exists by virtue of the role that it has in its sphere of existence, particularly in the way it functions for humankind and human society, p. 26.

In reflecting this supposed ancient scientific understanding of the world in the time of Moses c.1445-1495 B.C.E. the Genesis One description would have been similar to the understanding of the ancient Near Eastern peoples of the time with some notable theological exceptions. So the cosmology in Genesis would also have been function or role oriented rather than being concerned over material origins. Genesis One, therefore, does not give an account of the original creation of matter **or of the fashioning of any material thing**. Therefore, from our modern viewpoint, this view presupposes the creation of the material universe earlier than Genesis 1:1 and means that Genesis 1:1 is not about the material creation of the universe. This is because of a better understanding of the usage of the Hebrew words *bara* and *asa*.

THE MEANING OF THE HEBREW TERMS ‘BARA’ AND ‘ASA’

The usual translation or interpretation of these words is such that *bara* means ‘create’ (materially) and *asa* means ‘make’ (materially). However, in its 50 occurrences in the Hebrew Scriptures **BARA** בָּרָא always has God as the subject and it means ‘create’ functionally. In English the word ‘create’ can refer either to material creation or to **functional creation**. Examples of functional creation would be to ‘create a committee’ or ‘create havoc.’ Similarly, the creative activity in Genesis One can be seen to be functional by the facts that:

- By usage in the Hebrew Scriptures the objects of *bara* are **functional** in a large percentage of its contexts.
- There is no mention of materials in the Genesis One account. This has generally and mistakenly been assumed to imply material creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).

- However, the above usage of the word makes it far more likely that the account is describing functional creation i.e. to ‘create the role of’ something.

The Hebrew word **ASA** can mean ‘make’ in a sense different to making something material e.g. ‘make a name’ for oneself, or ‘make an agreement.’ This word also has other meanings than ‘to make.’ Similar to the French verb *faire* as meaning ‘to make’ or ‘to do,’ the Hebrew verb can mean ‘to do.’ Additionally, according to context, it can carry the meanings of ‘to complete’, ‘to perfect’, ‘to prepare’, ‘to modify’, and ‘to put in order (**arrange**).’ Again, because the Hebrew mindset looked at things from a functional rather than material viewpoint *asa* often means ‘to make functionally.’ Especially is this the case when *asa* is used in contexts where *bara* appears.

LITERAL EVENTS IN A FIGURATIVE FRAMEWORK

Because Moses presents Genesis One as a historical, **literal exalted prose narrative of a storyline** set within a **framework** of a seven-day week, and because the Israelites understood *bara* to mean creation in functional terms, then that is the most literal explanation of Genesis One. This means that the YEC is not actually a literal interpretation because of its misunderstanding of the meaning of *bara*. The fact is that in Genesis One “no materials for the creative act are ever mentioned” This has led most commentators to propose that the material creation was made out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). However, it seems never to have occurred to most of the commentators that Genesis One is not about the material creation. Viewed this way the lack of materials helps toward the conclusion that the account is actually not about the material creation at all but about the roles or functions of the component parts of the ancient world. Furthermore, although Genesis One is to be taken literally it is also characterized by literary artistry as recognized in the Framework and Analogical Days views.

GENESIS 1:1 IS AN INTRODUCTORY SUMMARIZING STATEMENT

Based on the biblical usage of *bara* Genesis 1:1 does not concern the creation of the material universe, nor is it part of Day One, but is **an independent clause** operating as **a summarizing introduction** to the period of all six “days” which concern the bringing of the world into an ordered state because: “**In the beginning God created the roles of** (Heb. *bara*) **the heavens and the earth.**” That Genesis 1:1 is a statement **of introduction** is seen from the facts that:

- In Hebrew usage the word “beginning” does not speak of a point in time before the 6 “days” but of **a period of time**. So as with the other 11 *toledots* introducing their sections, Genesis 1:1 acts as the first *tolodot* and so completes the biblical literary pattern of 12.
- The phrase “*then God said*” begins each of the 6 “days” (starting at verse 3 and not verse 1), and so indicating that verse one is likely to be a summarizing statement for all 6 “days.”
- The Genesis 2:1 statement: “**Thus the heavens and earth were finished,**” is a concluding statement about the work of the 6 “days,” and so showing that this was the subject of verse one.

THE “TOLEDOTS” ARE INTRODUCTIONS

- ❖ “These are the generations (account/history - Heb. *toledot*) of the heavens and the earth when they were **created**, in the day that the LORD God **made** the earth and the heavens” (*Gen. 2:4*).

If we take Genesis 1:1 as a statement of introduction to the 6 “days” then there are 12 *toledots* as the structure of Genesis. They function like a zoom lens as well as acting **as a hinge** connecting back to the previous passage as evidenced in 2:4. So 2:4a reflects back to the passage from 1:1 to 2:3. Then 2:4b introduces the new divine name, “Yahweh God,” which points forward to events in 2:5-3:24.

ON DAY SEVEN — GOD ENTERS HIS COSMIC TEMPLE

The role of Day Seven is mystifying when one assumes that Genesis One concerns material origins. However, to an ancient Israelite the seventh day would be the most important of the days of the week because on that day God had reached the point of having taken His creation from a state of being non-functional to a state of full functionality so that it is now an ordered societal system and then He enters His temple to take control of the running of this ordered system. So the term ‘rest’ in most translations really gives the wrong impression of the purpose of Day Seven. So because all is now stable God ceases from His activity of bringing everything into order and moves on to a new and different activity in His temple—His resting place:

- ❖ “Let us go to his **dwelling place!**
Let us worship before his **footstool!**
Ascend, O LORD, to your **resting place,**
you and the **ark** of your strength!
... Certainly the LORD has chosen **Zion;**
he decided to make it his home.
He said, “This will be my **resting place** forever;
I will live here, for I have chosen it” (*Ps. 132:7, 8, 13, 14*).

The tabernacle was God’s ancient dwelling place with the Ark of the Covenant as His footstool. So the seventh day is when God, having brought everything to order, now enters His throne room to begin ruling over His ordered world. This is similar to the pattern of the ancient pagan peoples who viewed temples as the homes of the gods. The association of cosmos and temple is seen clearly in the following passages:

- ❖ “Thus says the LORD: ‘**Heaven is my throne,** and the **earth is my footstool;** what is **the house** that you would build for me, and what is the **place of my rest?** All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD...’” (*Isa. 66:1, 2*).
- ❖ “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord **sitting upon a throne,** high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the **temple.** Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; **the whole earth is full of his glory!**’” (*Isa. 6:1-3*).
- ❖ “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the **highest heaven cannot contain you;** how much less **this house** that I have built! (*1 Kings 8:27*).

These texts emphasize the premise of Genesis One: that it should be understood as an account of functional origins of the cosmos as a figurative temple and with the work on each of the 6 “days” as being part of the inauguration of this temple cosmos (cp. 1Kings 6:37, 65). Apart from the inauguration of the original temple taking 7 days (1Kings 8:2) Ezekiel prophesies that the future temple will also take 7 days for its inauguration (Ezek 43:25, 26). This understanding is enhanced by the fact that both the tabernacle and the Jerusalem temple were designed with the imagery of the cosmos.

EXEGETICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE COSMIC TEMPLE INAUGURATION VIEW

Israelite understanding in Moses’ time may **not have been as primitive** as Walton proposes. The fact that certain Scriptures use **metaphorical language** to describe the earth e.g. “pillars of the earth” indicates that Moses may not have had the primitive ‘triple-decked’ concept of the material universe. In countering this concept, Professor of Old Testament, Walter Kaiser Jr. states:

To begin with, nowhere does the Hebrew text state or imply that the *raqia'* (often translated “firmament” but better translated as expanse) is solid or firm. It is simply an “extended surface” or “expanse.” The idea of “firmness” or “solidity” came more from the Latin Vulgate translation of “firmamentum”... The “expanse” of the heavens did not imply or call for a sort of astrodome-like structure.

The first place where the concept of “windows” appeared is in the flood story. Thereafter, other things come through those “windows,” including “barley” (2 Kings 7:1,2), “trouble” and “anguish” (Is 24:18), and “blessing” (Mal 3:10).

Neither is the case for a flat earth all that convincing—at least no more convincing than when modern newscasters claim that their news bureau has gone to the “four corners of the earth” to gather their news...These are legitimate literary conventions to designate in most cases the four points of the compass. Other passages speak just as openly of the “circle of the earth” (e.g. Is 40:22). The subterranean features, including the pillars that allegedly support the earth, sheol and the “waters under the earth,” on close examination also fail to uphold the “triple-decked” or “three storied” concept of the universe”. The “waters under the earth” easily qualify as the waters below the shoreline where the fish dwell...Some passages, it is true, do refer to the “foundations” of the earth as resting on “pillars,” but both terms are used metaphorically as we continue to do to this day. And what shall we say about Job 26:7 that has the earth resting on nothing?

The so called primitive view of cosmology in the bible turns out to be a contrived view that cannot bear up under examination. *The Old Testament Documents –Are They Reliable*, pp.76, 77

Perhaps even the ancient cosmology of the surrounding nations wasn't so primitive as to imagine that the sky was a solid dome, but they were simply using metaphorical language. If the Greeks knew that the earth was spherical by, at least, 200 B.C. it is likely that the Egyptians, who had very good knowledge of astronomy and mathematics, would have known this possibly a thousand years earlier. If that is the case, then Moses, having been educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, may also have been aware of such a fact.

1. The Literary analogical factors of Genesis One are not mentioned.
2. The framework of the “days” is not exact.
3. The 6 “days” run in sequence chronologically.

SUMMARY OF APPROACHES 1, 2 AND 3

The two “analogical of God’s workweek” views show Genesis One and Two as following a synoptic-resumption-expansion pattern that can be seen in numerous other places in the Scriptures. They also take Moses’ presentation of the days as literally 144 hours for an Israelite’s workweek while, at the same time, acknowledging that the events of Genesis Two clearly show the logical impossibility, in the reality of God’s creation, of the days as being actually of 24 hours each for God’s workweek. This is further shown because the seventh day has not yet ended. Hence, Moses’ presentation must be analogical. **The Framework version** of this view correctly demonstrates that Moses is indicating topics and themes. However, these do not run exactly parallel and, in fact, would mean that God actually produced everything within three days rather than the six that Genesis One details. Although Days One and Four indicate parallel thought they do not indicate the actual creation of light or of the luminaries which were evidently created at the point described in Genesis 1:1. This view also fails to see the evident chronological sequence of the six Days. However, the **Analogical Days Model** corrects the Framework view problems by acknowledging the chronological sequence of the six Days, and that the luminaries, the earth and the oceans were already created within the scope of verses 1 and 2 of Genesis One. This means that Day One describes God’s operation to bring to an end the total darkness and lack of order described in Genesis 1:2 and then later on during Day Four He caused the sources of light to function as time-markers.

However, it is **the Cosmic Temple Inauguration View** which adds the vital factors of the Genesis One creation account as concerning functional rather than material origins and that God enters His cosmic temple on the seventh day.

Nevertheless, all three views have their problems. So in the following study and in using much of the information that has gone before, we present our own proposed approach as a possible understanding.

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SUGGESTED READING

The Genesis Debate edited by David Hagopian

In the Beginning – The Opening Chapters of Genesis by Henri Blocher

Genesis 1-4 – A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary by C. John Collins

The Lost World of Genesis One by John H. Walton

