

TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE GENESIS CREATION ACCOUNT

As detailed in the previous two studies, there are features of many of the various approaches that are valid and applicable to this issue; so our proposed approach will include some of those features. However, the proposed approach will be predominantly based on **the Analogical Days view** and the **Cosmic Temple Inauguration view**, which we believe have the fewest problems. Therefore, much from the previous two studies is repeated in this study for the sake of completeness.

FUNCTIONS IN THE ANALOGICAL DAYS VIEW

AS A PROPOSED UNDERSTANDING

THIS VIEW PROPOSES:

- That Genesis One and Two, written by Moses c.1445-1495 B.C.E., are a single creation account with 1:-2:4a being the first pericope (passage) and 2:4b-25 being the second which narrows the focus to the Garden of Eden.
- That Moses presents as the first pericope 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 Moses presents as the second pericope a historical, **literal *ordinary prose narrative*** of the setting up of the Garden of Eden.
- 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 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 biblical account or the reverse.
- That neither Moses nor Israel was given any extraordinary revelations concerning 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:
 - The nature of God.
 - The role of humanity.
 - Ethics.
 - The worship of God
- That Moses had a similar **cosmology** to that of the surrounding nations as demonstrated by the biblical vocabulary. However, it is very unlikely that those nations or Moses held a view of the earth as a **flat disc** and of the sky as a **solid dome**, but rather that they and he used metaphorical language. (Please see Byl’s and Kaiser’s comments below.)
- That the cultural context is **functional** according to **ancient Near Eastern literature**.
- That the Hebrew mindset concerned itself with **functions** rather than with material substance, therefore the Genesis cosmology was role or **function oriented**.
- 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 the failure of Genesis One to mention materials is taken to mean that everything was “**created functionally**” rather than meaning that everything was materially created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) as has been generally interpreted, and therefore the material creation *ex nihilo* of the sun, moon, stars and planet earth occurred before the Genesis 1:1 ff story **began**.
- That, **Genesis 1:1** is a **summarizing introduction** to the seven “days” which concern the bringing of the world into an ordered state i.e. appointing everything to its functions.
- That the phrase “heavens and earth” in Genesis 1:1 and 2:4 is a **merism** indicating a totality i.e. the entire cosmos and with all later references to “heaven” as meaning *the sky* and all references to “the earth” as meaning *the land (ground)*.
- 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 **Genesis 1:2** begins the story in describing the non-functional earth i.e. as unproductive, uninhabited and with darkness over the **ocean**.
- That **Days 1 to 6** in Genesis 1:3-31 concern God’s creative week of work in appointing of time, weather, vegetation, birds, sea creatures, land animals, and mankind to their functions in an ordered system i.e. the progressive development to bring the land/sky into a condition whereby it is no longer ‘**an unproductive and uninhabited place**’ but rather an ordered and fully functional world.
- 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 completely unique things:
 - 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 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 “days” are broadly sequentially **chronological**, so that there are actually **6** of God’s “days” of creation – all following one after the other.
- 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 of the seven “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 “**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 **anthropomorphic language** in the Scriptures about God, especially His rest, indicates that He is not subject to human time scale and so He is not restricted to 24 hour days.
- That the total picture of God’s completing of His work is not of a literal 144 hour week of days because **literary techniques** in the account indicate otherwise.

- That 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 Genesis One uses the literary technique of a **framework of 2 themes – forming and filling, and 3 topics so that combined** as Days 1&4; 2&5 or 3&6 they are approximately parallel i.e.:
 - 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.

Yet the parallels partially break down when examined so that they do not form only 3 “days.” However, this framework may act simply as a **memory aid**, but not detracting from the actual chronological sequence of God’s “days” of creation. However, this presentation of the framework is an indicator of the literary analogical aspect of the “days.”

- That Genesis 2:2, 3 shows **Day Seven**, in relation to God’s work of creation, as being of **indeterminate length**. Later Scriptures demonstrate that His Seventh 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 with 2:4b introducing the events of 2:5 to 4:26.
- That Day Three indicates natural growth of vegetation and so indicating that the “days” of creation were longer than 24 hours.
- That because **Genesis 2:4-25** is the *second pericope* of the **same single creation account**, one must take its context into account. Here the events in the Garden of Eden take longer than 24 hours and demonstrate the **natural means** used by God in His material creation work. So it is in Genesis Two that we see evidence that the reality of God’s creating of material things cannot have been a literal 144 hours.
- That the Hebrew stylistic literary technique of **synoptic/resumption-expansion** is used in Genesis 2:5-25. This means that basic statements are often repeated and more detail is added.
- That on the seventh day God entered His cosmic temple (the universe) and remains there until the creation of New Heavens and Earth or permanently.
- That one must take into account the many **other creation accounts** or statements in the rest of the Scriptures and their genre e.g. 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 STUDY 5.

MOSES PRESENTED THE SAME COSMOLOGY AS THAT HELD BY THE WORLD OF THE TIME

The ‘**Functions in the Analogical Days View**’ does not describe the Genesis One cosmology in modern scientific terms or use it to address modern scientific concerns. This is because the biblical record does not indicate that God gave the Israelites any ‘scientific’ information beyond that of the neighbouring nations. However, we do not subscribe to the view expressed by John Walton concerning the Israelites that:

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.

The Lost World of Genesis One, p. 16.

DID THE ANCIENT NATIONS BELIEVE THAT THE EARTH WAS FLAT AND WITH A DOME ABOVE IT?

In his bylogos blog of February 19, 2010, Professor emeritus John Byl, Ph.D. (astronomy) and elder in the Canadian Reformed Church makes the following observations about the ancient understanding of the universe:

1. Ancient man was a much keener observer of the night sky than modern desk-bound scholars. They were well aware that the stellar sky rotates daily. **Hence it cannot be a solid hemisphere held up by pillars fixed on the earth.** Further, they were well aware of months and seasons. Hence the sun and moon were not fixed in a stellar shell. They were also well aware that the sun and moon were much more distant than flying birds.

2. A second difficulty is that **ancient cosmology as such does not really go back earlier than about 550 BC**, with the advent of Greek science. Before that cosmology was intertwined with mythology, making it very difficult to determine what the ancients actually believed about the nature of the physical universe. Noel K. Weeks (Cosmology in Historical Context," *Westminster Theological Journal* 68.2 (Fall 2006): 283-293) elaborates on this in his detailed critique of Seely.

3. A further difficulty, noted also by Weeks, is that there is no uniform pre-modern belief regarding cosmology/mythology. Sumerian, Egyptian, Canaanite and Babylonian mythologies had significant differences. Much of the evidence for Mesopotamian belief in a flat earth floating on a sea is **based on one ancient drawing:**

This is the oldest known world map--the *Imago Mundi* of 6th century BC Babylonia. It shows Babylon on the Euphrates, surrounded by a circular landmass including Assyria and Armenia, surrounded by a "bitter river" (Oceanus).

Note, first, that the map dates much later than the time of Moses (ca 1500 BC). Also, at first sight, it looks similar to medieval world maps, which depicted the land mass of Europe-Asia-Africa surrounded by an ocean. However, the latter is known to be **just a 2-d depiction of a spherical earth.** Finally, a closer look shows that the Babylonian map has islands beyond the surrounding ocean. So it is not a complete world map. In sum, there is **no definite evidence that ancient people uniformly believed in a flat earth.**

4. **Genesis itself says nothing about a flat earth.** Seely's case rests primarily on one word: the *raqia* (*firmament* or *expanse* [ESV]) of Gen.1:7, created to separate the waters beneath from the waters above. This is generally thought to refer to the atmosphere and sky or space. Seely, however, claims that *raqia* refers to the common pre-modern conception of the sky as a solid dome. Yet **the Genesis *raqia* is clearly not solid.** Note first that in Gen.1:8 the *raqia* is called *heaven* (*shamayim*). But **birds fly in *shamayim*** (Deut.4:17), so that it can't be solid. Also, the sun, moon, and stars are placed in the *raqia* (Gen.1:14-18). The sun and moon clearly move at different rates than the stars, of which the Israelites would have been well aware (else there would be no months, seasons or years). Hence the *raqia* can't be solid.

5. What about the water above the *raqia*? Calvin thought this referred to clouds; James Jordan believes it refers to the sea of crystal in heaven (*Creation in Six Days*, p.180). God created more than meets our physical eye.

Another interesting line of thought is pursued by Peter Leithart (*A House for My Name* 2000), who sees many similarities between Genesis 1 and the building of the temple. God's universe is described as His three-storied house. Also G.K. Beale (*The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism* 2008) contends that Genesis is **expressing its theological conceptions** of the universe, understood to be a huge temple for God (p.163). Hence the architectural depictions of the temple-house are to be **understood figuratively**. He argues that Israel's temple is a small model of the cosmos, which is a huge temple. Beale specifically (pp.196-201) rebuts Seely's notion of a solid *raqia*. (emphasis ours).

A METAPHORICAL PICTURE

The fact that the Scriptures use a considerable amount of **metaphorical language** for many reasons indicates that Israelite understanding in Moses' time may not have been as primitive as P. Seely and J. Walton propose. In countering the literal 'triple-decked' concept of the universe, 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.

Certainly the Greeks knew that the earth **was spherical** from ancient times and it is very likely that the Egyptians, whose knowledge of astronomy and mathematics was very good, would also have known this fact. If that was the case, then Moses, having been educated in all the wisdom of Egypt, may also have been aware of such a fact. Furthermore, the Israelites in Moses' time may have realized that the earth is a sphere because its circular shadow appears on the moon during lunar eclipses (Job 26:10; Isa. 40:22).

NOT A CONCORDIST VIEW

The '**Functions in the Analogical Days 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 our proposed view does not bring modern scientific understanding into its explanation of Genesis or indeed into any of the Hebrew Scriptures.

NOTE: Our view does not accommodate *theistic evolution*. So we agree when Walton states that:

It would not be surprising that the narratives in the *text* of Genesis do not directly address the question of theistic evolution because there was no belief in anything like that in the ancient world for the author of Genesis to anticipate or refute. In contrast, however, the *theology* of the Bible leaves no room for such a belief...theistic evolution is an oxymoron that satisfies no one. *The NIV Application Commentary – Genesis*, p.156

ANCIENT COSMOLOGY IS ROLE OR FUNCTION ORIENTED

According to *The Lost World of Genesis One* 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.

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**. This understanding comes from a better understanding of the usage of the Hebrew words *bara* and *asa*. 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.

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 **figurative 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 detail of a 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.

THE TWO THEMES COMBINED WITH THREE TOPICS INDICATE ANALOGY AND FORM A MEMORY AID

Topic 1: (Days 1 and 4): Here the word “light” refers to **the period of light** which is *separated* from the period of darkness thereby providing the basis for **time**, and with the sun and the moon appointed as functionaries for time markers and body-clock regulators.

Topic 2: (Days 2 and 5): The *separating* of the waters gives the water cycle as providing the basis for **weather** and controlling precipitation, and with the Great sea monsters, gliding creatures and birds appointed as functionaries for themselves within this new environment.

NOTE: In verse 21 the word *bara* is used once again but with reference to the sea creatures and the birds.

Topic 3: (Days 3 and 6): The *separating* of the sea from the dry land so that vegetation now grows providing the basis for **food** with the three types of land animals and mankind appointed as functionaries for themselves to utilize the food.

THE PARALLELS

Theme 1: Functions

Topic 1: Day 1 and parallel to →

“...and there was **light**...

God *separated light from darkness.*”

Topic 2: Day 2 and parallel to →

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

Topic 3: Day 3 and parallel to →

“...let the dry **land** appear”

(i.e. separated from the sea).

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

Theme 2: Functionaries

Day 4

“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 5

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

Day 6

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

However, this framework acts only as a **memory aid** because these parallels are not exact, and there are other factors showing that the “days” run chronologically.

REASONS FOR CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE “DAYS” IN GENESIS ONE

- 1) The natural reading of Genesis One is of 6 “days” running chronologically.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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 dry land appears. The existence of many of the land animals is dependent on the growth of vegetation and on making the sun and moon visible for the regulating of their body clocks.
- 4) 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.
- 5) 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.”

The combination of these 5 factors gives strong evidence for the “days” as running consecutively.

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*).

Because Genesis 1:1 is a statement of introduction to the 6 “days” it is virtually equivalent to a *toledot*. So this makes 12 *toledots* as the structure of Genesis all functioning like zoom lenses. Additionally, the 11 latter ones act **as hinges** connecting back to the previous passage. For example, 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.

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

- It is faulty semantics to read the “days” as of unspecified length or of 1,000 or 7,000 years or anything other than connected to the 24-hour cycle of days. Whenever, in the Bible, “day” has the meaning of unspecified length, it has a qualifying genitive, such as “day of the LORD” or “day of wrath.” Yet no such qualifier exists here in Genesis 1. Even the Genesis 2:4 statement of “in **the day** that Yahweh God made the earth and the heavens” simply means “**when** Yahweh God made...” as in many translations.
- In his writings, Moses’ use of the Hebrew word יום (yom) is accompanied by **numbers** 119 times. On each occasion literal days are meant. This is true also, for the 357 times in the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. So whenever *yom* is used **with a numerical adjective, it refers to a literal day.**
- Of the 2,304 occurrences of the word *yom* in the Hebrew Scriptures the overwhelming majority mean a 24-hour day or the hours of daylight. The temporal significance of the word *yom* is seen in the fact that on Day One the literal time of **daylight** is called “*day*.” Although the semantic field for the word *yom* allows for ‘a long period of time,’ yet in the specific context of Genesis One such a definition would be excluded.
- Genesis 1:5 gives us God’s definition of the word “day” when it says “*God called the light Day.*” This definition of “day” as being of around 12 hours shows that all the time-periods in Genesis One are within the normal time-scales by which humans operate.

These key facts reduce the semantic field for the use of ‘yom’ in Genesis One to only literal 24-hour days. In ‘Exegetical Fallacies’ D. A. Carson speaks of the fallacy of: *Unwarranted adoption of an expanded semantic field*. Yet, this is what Day/Age proponents have done. So the exegetical evidence suggests that the word “day” in Genesis One refers to a literal twenty-four hour day. In fact, Genesis One uses “day,” “night,” “morning,” “evening,” “years,” and “seasons,” so that consistency would require sorting out how all these terms could possibly be used to express ‘ages.’

THE 24 HOUR “DAYS” ARE ANALOGICAL OF 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 view that the “days” are analogical so that we should treat each “*day*” as **meaning 24 hours** but **referring to God’s creation workweek**.

Please see under EXEGETICAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE 24-HOUR DAYS AS REFERRING TO MATERIAL CREATION BY GOD WITHIN 144 HOURS in STUDY 6.

EXAMPLE OF HOW ANALOGY WORKS

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; 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 One and Two shows that the days that **mean 24 hours** have been **used analogically** and therefore **refer to God’s creation days** as 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.

FACTORS INDICATING THE ANALOGICAL ASPECT

1. THE PARALLELS OF THE DAYS

In Genesis One 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.

2. DAY 3 b DEMONSTRATES NATURAL PROCESSES OF GROWTH

Rather than instant trees, this account shows that a time longer than 24 hours was required for trees and plants to grow and mature so that they could function for the benefit of animals and humans:

❖ “Let the earth **sprout** vegetation: plants **yielding** seed...The earth **brought forth** Vegetation.”

“Sprouting forth” means that it was growing by natural processes. Such growing is not accomplished in 24 hours. Fruit bearing trees require several years to grow to produce fruit. This indicates that the vegetation was not made fully grown and ready to pick. Also note Genesis 2:5 stating: “no plant had yet **sprouted**” and 2:9: “Out of the ground the LORD God **caused to grow** every tree.” These are terms of natural activity.

3. AN OPEN-ENDED SEVENTH DAY

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

- 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 is not completed as a “day” of cessation from the creation of the world’s functions.
- The statement that: “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) indicates that Day Seven may be very different from the 6 previous “days.”
- If God enters His cosmic temple to take His throne as ruler of the world then Day Seven must be of long duration otherwise He would be seen as leaving the temple to continue creative work once more and this would become a new work-week.
- 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 because God does not need to ‘catch His breath.’ Such anthropomorphism moves us away from the idea that Day Seven was literally 24-hours long.*

In Old Testament times 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). Later the writer to the Hebrews warns: “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 Day Seven then God might have long ago, on each eighth day, restarted function creating activity *with regard to the world* and there would have been thousands of God’s 144-hour weeks of functional creation including thousands of single rest days. Yet there is no evidence of any such new work.

- If Day Seven 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.”
- “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 its early 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 the functions* of everything but not from maintaining the universe and doing good toward His creatures— acts of mercy etc.

ON DAY FOUR — “AND GOD **MADE** THE TWO GREAT LIGHTS”

In verse 3 God, on Day 1, says “*Let there be light, and there was light. And God separated the light from the darkness.*” Similarly, 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. 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)

Here the chiasm emphasizes the sun, moon and stars as now beginning to function as governors of the rhythm of life. Therefore this is the appointment to their functions of these lights. So nothing here requires or indicates that the actual making of the sun, the moon “*...and the stars*” took place within the fourth creative “day.” Furthermore, C. John Collins notes that:

The verb *made* in Genesis 1:16 does not specifically mean “create”; it can refer to that, but it can also refer to “working on something that is already there”, or even “appointed.” Verse 14 focuses on the **function of the lights** rather than on their origin: the verb *let there be* is completed with the purpose clause “to separate.” Hence, the account of the day’s work focuses on these lights serving a function that God appointed for the wellbeing of man...

Likewise, the verbs in Genesis 1:3, “let there be...and there was,” do not of themselves imply creation... We can take these verses as describing God calling for the “dawn” of the first day and appointing the heavenly lights to their function in service of mankind on the fourth day. GENESIS 1-4, p.57

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.

THE TEXT AND BASIC COMMENTARY

THE FIRST PERICOPHE - 1:1 TO 2:3

This passage concerns the creation of a functioning societal system by separating, naming, and creating the roles of the component parts.

THE INTRODUCTORY SUMMARIZING STATEMENT

THIS COVERS ALL SIX DAYS

"In the beginning God created the roles of (Heb. *bara*) the sky and the land" (*Genesis 1:1*).

The merism "the sky and the land" or "the heavens and the earth" is used of a totality. Therefore, this phrase refers to everything mentioned in all 6 "days," and because 2:1 concludes the 7 "days" with the phrase "the heavens and the earth were completed" it is evident that the phrase "In the beginning..." in verse one is an introduction and summary statement of what will be expanded upon from verses 3 to 31 concerning God's creating the order of the world as we know it. Additionally, the literary pattern of the eleven *toledot* phrases i.e. "this is the account of" up to Genesis chapter 11 indicates that 1:1 is introducing events in a period of time; thereby making 12 designated sections as fitting a biblical pattern. So the 'beginning' does not refer to a point in time before the 7 "days" begin but refers to God's setting up of the functions and roles of various functionaries and is not about the material creation of the universe which was already in existence.

ORDER AND FUNCTION ARE NEEDED

THE NON-FUNCTIONAL EARTH

"Now the land was without purpose (Heb. *tohu*) and uninhabited (Heb. *bohu*), and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the extended power of God was circling over the surface of the water" (*1:2*).

This verse indicates that the material universe already existed because the earth and watery deep existed materially, yet they did not exist functionally inasmuch as they were not, at that time, acting as an ordered system. By a study of the usage of the terms *tohu* and *bohu* in the Hebrew Scriptures it becomes clear that they do not refer to any material structure, but rather to that which is **non-functional**. So verse 2 demonstrates the conditions before order is to be brought to the world. God's creating of the various functions contrasts the orderliness of His work with the chaos expressed in the various creation accounts of the surrounding nations. So verse 2 is the beginning of the story.

DAY 1. SEPARATION OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

THE BASIS FOR THE TIME-CYCLE

"God said, 'Let there be [the period of] **light**.' And there was [the period of] light! God saw that the [the period of] light was good, so God **separated** the [the period of] light from the [the period of] darkness. God **called** the [the period of] light "day" and the [the period of] darkness "night." There was evening, and there was morning, marking the **first day**'" (*1:3-5*).

Concerning light, modern particle physics was obviously not known to the Israelites and so light was not understood to be material. Furthermore, this passage, by metonymy, concerns the period of light. This is proven by the fact that "light" is called "day" so that day and night act as time-markers. "Evening" was the transition into the period of darkness and "morning" was the transition into the period of daylight. After the darkness in verse 2 there is "evening" and then God calls forth "light." This explains why evening is always stated first. So verses 3-5 concern the creation of the **basis for time**.

DAY 2. ESTABLISHING “SKY” BY SEPARATION OF UPPER AND LOWER WATERS

THE BASIS FOR THE WATER-CYCLE

“God said, ‘Let there be an *expanse* in the midst of the waters and let it *separate* water from water.’ So God *arranged* (Heb. *asa*) the *expanse* and *separated* the water below the *expanse* from the water above it. It was so. God *called* the *expanse* “sky.” There was evening, and there was morning, a *second day*” (1:6-8).

This basis for the water cycle would later give humans the necessary weather for the growing of food. Also this creation of “sky” now makes the space for the later biological entities above the lower waters to live i.e. birds, animals and humans. So verses 6-8 concern the creation of the **basis for weather**.

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DAY 3. SEPARATION OF LAND FROM SEA

THE BASIS FOR FOOD PRODUCTION

“God said, ‘Let the water below the sky be *gathered to one place* and let dry ground appear.’ It was so. God *called* the dry ground “*land*” and the gathered waters he *called* “seas.” God saw that it was good ” (1:9-10).

The Hebrew words generally rendered ‘heavens’ and ‘earth’ are equally well rendered as ‘sky’ and ‘land’, and in fact should be rendered this way. But concerning land and mountain building, understanding of plate tectonics was obviously not known to the ancient Israelites. It is also interesting that it is dry ground that appears. If this were a material structural function that was being described then the land would be wet for far more than 24 hours. However, this describes societal functioning.

.....

FOOD PRODUCTION

“God said, “Let the land *produce vegetation*: plants *yielding* seeds according to their kinds, and trees *bearing* fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” It was so. The land *produced* vegetation—plants yielding seeds according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. God saw that it was good. ¹³ There was evening, and there was morning, a *third day*” (1:11-13).

So verses 9-13 concern the creation of the **basis for food production**.

.....

SUMMARY OF DAYS ONE, TWO AND THREE

On these three “days” nothing material is created. Even the vegetation is simply being produced through growth from its existing seed. Rather there is separation of already existing

material creations and an arranging of them for certain purposes. So God’s activity here is such that the basis for necessary roles and functions is created:

- First Day: The basis for time.
- Second Day: The basis for weather.
- Third Day: The basis for food production.

DAY 4. THE ROLE OF THE SUN, MOON, AND STARS

THE TIME MARKERS

“God said, ‘Let there be **lights** (Heb. *me.erot*) **in the expanse** of the sky to **separate** the day from the night, and let them be for signs and the appointed times (Heb. *mo.adim* - festivals) and the days and years, and let them **serve** as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the land.’ It was so. God **arranged** (Heb. *asa*) two great lights [*in their roles*]—the greater light to **rule over** the day and the lesser light to rule over the night. He **arranged** (Heb. *asa*) stars [*in their roles*] also. God set the lights in the expanse of the sky to shine on the land,¹⁸ to **preside over** the day and the night, and to **separate** the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. There was evening, and there was morning, a **fourth day**” (1:14-18).

So just as on Day Two the making or arranging of the **expanse** refers to its role so, too, with the making of the “two great lights.” This has nothing to do with the material creation of the sun, moon and stars. This passage very clearly describes the roles of the sun, moon and stars in serving, ruling over, and presiding over various aspects of God’s orderly world. This was particularly relevant to Israelites who would be able to calculate the timing for their ‘seasons’ i.e. their various festival celebrations associated with the sowing and reaping of crops.

Scientifically, the sun and the moon are not actually set *in* the sky, but from the viewpoint of an Israelite standing on the earth, they appear that way, especially when one understands the Israelite as seeing the sun, moon and stars all make their way across it, just as we might inaccurately say “I can see the sun rising” or “I can see the sun setting” when scientifically it does not rise or set. Even today we use similar phenomenological expressions, such as “the stars in the sky.” However, one of the theological points of this passage is that, because pagans worshipped the sun and moon as named gods, the usual Hebrew names [*Shemesh* and *Yarih*, respectively] are not given them here. They are simply described as greater and lesser lights.

DAY 5. THE ROLE OF THE CREATURES IN THE WATERS AND THE SKY

“God said, “Let the water **swarm** with swarms of living creatures and let birds **fly** above the land across the expanse of the sky.” God **created the roles of** (Heb. *bara*) **the great sea creatures** and every living and moving thing with which the water swarmed, according to their kinds, and every winged **bird** according to its kind. God saw that it was good. God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and **multiply** and **fill** the water in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the land.” There was evening, and there was morning, a **fifth day**.”” (1:20-23).

Again *bara*, by usage, means ‘created functionally’ - the functions or roles given to these creatures being to multiply, swarm and fill the seas in the case of the sea creatures, and to multiply and fly in the case of the birds. So Day 5 details the functionaries as they carry out their own functions.

DAY 6. THE ROLE OF THE CREATURES ON THE LAND

ANIMALS

“God said, “Let the land **produce** living creatures according to their kinds: cattle, creeping things, and wild **animals**, each according to its kind.” It was so. God **arranged** (Heb. *asa*) [*the role of*] the wild animals according to their kinds, the cattle according to their kinds, and all the creatures that creep along the ground according to their kinds. God saw that it was good.”” (1:24-25).

Just as with the third day statement concerning the producing of vegetation from the land does not mean some spontaneous generation from the ground in modern-day evolutionary terms, so, too, the

land does not literally generate these animals, but is simply the place where they are produced **through normal reproduction**. The image is of a land bursting into fullness and not of a land acting as a causal force. Also the Hebrew word (מין, min) for “kind” indicates that God was concerned with separating time, space, and species; in other words he is arranging His already materially created world.

.....

MANKIND

“Then God said, “Let us **arrange** (Heb. *asa*) [*the role of*] **humankind** in our image, after our likeness, so they may **rule over** the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the land, and over all the creatures that move on the land.” God **created the role of** (Heb. *bara*) humankind in his own image, in the image of God he **created their role** (Heb. *bara*), male and female he **created their role** (Heb. *bara*). God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and **multiply! Fill the land and subdue it** [*harness its potential and use its resources for your benefit*]. **Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.**” (1:26-28).

Again this is also a very role oriented passage whereby mankind is to multiply, fill the land and subdue it, and to rule over all the other creatures; yet rather than any physical image “the image of God” would be the God-given mental and spiritual capacities that would enable mankind to rule over the created order. Being created in “the image of God” may be either:

- **Representative.** That is that man is only made functionally “man” when he begins to represent God in his activity of ruling the world on God’s behalf.
- **Relational.** That man is fully ‘man’ only when he is functionally in relationship with God and the human community.

It may even be that the text has both of these aspects of being made in God’s image in mind.

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UTILISATION OF FOOD

“Then God said, ‘I now give you every **seed-bearing plant** on the face of the entire land and **every tree that has fruit with seed in it**. They will be yours **for food**. And to all the animals of the land, and to every bird of the air, and to all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every **green plant** for food.’ It was so. God saw all that he had made—and it was very good! There was evening, and there was morning, the **sixth day**” (1:29-31).

This does not mean that vegetation and fruit were to be the only food for humans and animals. Please see STUDY 8, AN ANCIENT CREATION.

SUMMARY OF DAYS FOUR, FIVE AND SIX

Fourth Day:

The role of the “lights” for time-keeping and festivals.

Fifth Day:

The role of the sea creatures and winged birds to multiply and fill their domains.

Sixth Day:

- a) The role of three types of animals according to their kinds.
- b) The role of mankind as being in God’s image to rule over everything, to multiply, and to fill and subdue the land.
- c) The role of plants and fruit trees as food for mankind and the animals.

COMPLETION OF A FUNCTIONING SOCIETAL SYSTEM

Genesis 2:1-3

¹“The sky and the land were completed with everything that was in them.” This gives the summary of what was completed in the 6 “days.”

²“By the seventh day God finished the work that he had been doing, and he **ceased** on the **seventh day** all the work that he had been doing. ³ God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he ceased all the work that he had been doing in creation.”

This is the unusual “day” because there is no “evening and morning” refrain after it.

THE LITERARY HINGE TO THE SECOND PERICOPE

⁴ This is the account (Heb. *toledot*) of the sky and the land when **their roles were created** (Heb. *bara*)—when the LORD God **arranged** (Heb. *asa*) the land and sky.”

PREPARATION COMPLETED

1. The total darkness removed and so providing the basis for time.
2. Water cycle begins and so providing the basis for weather.
3. Dry land appears/vegetation grows and so providing the basis for food.
4. Sun/moon appointed to function now as time markers/body-clock regulators.
5. Great sea creatures and other sea creatures, and birds appointed to function.
6. Three types of land animals and mankind appointed to function.

THE SECOND PERICOPE – 2:5 TO 2:25

EVENTS PRIOR TO ESTABLISHING THE GARDEN OF EDEN

This passage now moves on to speak of the details immediately prior to the establishing of the Garden of Eden. In doing so it is necessary to reflect further back than the Genesis One “days” to the time of the actual material “forming” of Adam. This shows man as created of the dust of the previously arid land after it was watered but before there was a Garden of Eden.

THE SOLUTION TO THE UNCULTIVATED LAND

❖ “When **no bush** of the field was yet in the land and **no small plant** of the field had yet **sprung up**—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,”
(*Gen. 2:5*).

Here we are given a picture 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 such as flax, barley, wheat or spelt* (Heb. *eseb-hassadeh*) requires a cultivator – humans who would work the soil and provide irrigation. Both types of vegetation require precipitation for their germination and growth. This shows that rain must have been the cause of the growth of vegetation on Day 3b and that **natural means** were used by God to bring about this situation first noted in Genesis 1:11-13 (Day 3b). 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 vegetation problem presented is followed by the two part solution of rain and then a cultivator.

THE RAINY SEASON BEGINS

The problem of no vegetation 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 by the regular working of the water-cycle:

- ❖ “But a mist [Heb. *ed* = water vapour] used [“*began*” *conceptually the inceptive sense is required*] to rise 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 although, by a study of languages related to Hebrew, some feel that the word *ed* means “**rain-cloud**,” yet in its only other occurrence of **Job 36:27** the most logical rendering of *ed* is “water vapour”:

- ❖ “He draws up the **water vapour** and then distils it into rain (NLT).”

‘Mist’ is a slightly misleading rendering because mist is made of very fine water droplets already condensed, rather than vapour. This water-vapour 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 water-vapour *began* rising from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—” (*Gen. 2:6*).

This is, of course, the water-cycle, whereby the vapour rises to become part of the clouds which later begin to condense so that rain falls as demonstrated in Job 36:27.

THE CULTIVATOR

- ❖ “...then the LORD God formed the man of the dust (‘soil’ NJB) from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (*Gen. 2:7*).

It is only in Genesis 2:7 that we are given a description of the first man’s actual material creation from the materials of the ground. In this account it is not the word *bara* that is used but rather it says: “...then the LORD God **formed** (Heb. *yatsah*) the man **of dust from the ground**” The phrase “formed... of dust” is really a metaphorical statement concerning man’s mortality (3:19).

DETAILS OF THE ESTABLISHING OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN

PLANTING OF THE GARDEN

- ❖ “And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and **there he put the man** whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ... ¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (*Gen. 2:8, 9, 15-17*).

The garden was planted either in the Land of Eden which was a land in the east (2:8 NJB) or in close proximity to the Land of Eden. In any case, Adam was created outside of the garden (2:7, 8, 15) in a previously arid land (2:5, 6), and 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.”

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.

MAN'S FUNCTION TO WORK AND TO FILL THE EARTH

❖ “The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden **to work it and keep it**”

(Gen. 2:15).

This resumes/expands the topic of mankind’s functional creation at the end of Day Six in 1:26, 27 for mankind to “**subdue**” the land. Here the newly relocated man was to work and maintain this park-like garden.

❖ “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’ ¹⁹Out of the ground the LORD God **formed** every *beast of the field* and every *bird of the sky*, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to *all the cattle*, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, **but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him**” (Gen. 2:18-20).

This concerns the material creation of animals and birds specifically for the Garden. It is also evident that Adam could not begin to fulfil the functions of mankind that were detailed on Day Six, namely, to **multiply and to fill the land** until a suitable partner was found for him.

THE MATERIAL CREATION OF EVE

❖ “So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²²The LORD God **fashioned** (Lit. ‘built up) into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³The man said,

‘This is now bone of my bones,

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman

Because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:21-23).

This further resumes/expands the topic of man’s functional creation with the ‘building’ of a suitable partner for Adam. This now enables mankind to fulfil the synoptic statement given at the end of Day Six in 1:26, 27 for them to: “Be fruitful and **multiply! Fill** the land and **subdue** it. Rule over...”

GENERAL COMMENT

The beginning of material creation was when there was no sea. In regard to the material creation Proverbs 8:23, 24 speaks of God’s wisdom as:

❖ “...from the **beginning**, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were **no depths** I was brought forth...”

So “the **beginning**” of the material creation concerned events at a very early stage of earth’s history even before the oceans, whereas the 6 “days” of functional creation begin after “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

CONCLUSION

Along with the Framework View, the Analogical Days View, and the Cosmic Temple Inauguration view the approach presented above is not aimed at establishing the ages of either the Earth or of the

entire universe from the Genesis account. So there is no attempt to make supposed scientific facts fit with the Genesis account as with Young Earth Creationism, and neither is there any attempt to mess with the grammar of the Genesis account to fit with actual scientific facts as with the Day/Age view and several other views presented in STUDY 5.

Furthermore, a review of the information in STUDY 9 shows that the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 have, up to now, been wrongly used to form chronologies and therefore cannot legitimately be used to calculate the time of Adam's creation. The gaps in those genealogies certainly mean that Adam existed some thousands of years earlier than the often presented 6,000 years. Furthermore, the Scriptures do make it clear that the earth and the universe are ancient (Please see STUDY 8).

Because of these facts it is clear that without any guidance from the Scriptures regarding the actual age of mankind or the earth or the universe, other than knowing that the earth and the universe are ancient, there is no real reason not to accept at least some of the time-table of creation as is generally accepted in the scientific world. In fact, the modern views of the Genesis Creation Days presented in the previous study are those of sincere, highly qualified Bible-believing scholars who recognize that the Scriptures do not give any ages for the earth or mankind, but leave it open. So each person who rejects this scientific time-table out-of-hand must ask himself if he is being fair or if he is demonstrating the same kind of arrogance or prejudice that atheists display toward believers in the Creator. Even if scientific understanding varies over time, is it really true that most scientists do not really know what they are doing? Is it really true that most scientists have some hidden agenda against the Bible so that they lie about their results? This writer does not believe either of those ideas to be the case generally. So if one accepts that the scientists are generally good at their work then it is possible that the earth really is 4.5 billion years old and that the universe is some 13.2 billion years old. Furthermore, biblical understanding also changes as knowledge of the ancient languages and biblical background continue to grow which is why this is only a proposed view.

Irrespective of these issues, in contrast to the ancient pagan accounts, the Genesis account gives Christians a sure foundation of monotheism from which to understand the rest of the Scriptures.

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