



Becker Bible Studies Template¹

Genesis 1:1-2

By Kathy L. McFarland

Summary

This Becker Bible Studies Worksheet for Genesis 1:1-2 begins with an important consideration for all Bible Teachers concerning the inerrancy and authority of Scripture as they prepare to teach with the detailed writings, notes, citations, references, and data documented to support the summarized teachings. While I have made every effort to maintain a moderate stance, with unbiased support for both liberal and conservative Bible teachers it still must be noted that I am a conservative Bible Teacher and if there is bias, it will move towards that direction. In those cases, I make reference to that conflict; the first note (in italics) begins with the presentation of *Inerrant or Historical Scripture*; it is a good example of my handling the cases where different beliefs between liberal and conservative Christians might conflict.

Compilation of Study for Bible Teachers

Good Bible teachers ensure the highest level of Scripture teachings by examining Bible verses objectively and presenting students with learning opportunities based fully upon the Word of God. Usually. But in the case of Genesis 1:1-2, the issues that continuously arise from the study of these two verses requires a subjective contemplation and analysis to fully present the beginning of God's creative acts. The depth of discussion stirred by an informed Bible teacher will capture Bible students' attention; Genesis 1:1-2 is the perfect beginning for binding a group of learners together, as they wrestle with the difficulties in the text. Perfectly led, their journey moved by their exercised imagination will produce a reverence deserved by the Lord, but often lacking in usual study sessions. What a perfect way to begin the study of God's Word revealed!

With the spiritual goal of stirring students to deeper spiritual growth, the difficult ideas surrounding Genesis 1:1-2 will be addressed first in this summary:

¹ Becker Bible Studies Template has been changed with additional categories and increased emphasis with ideas based upon the foundation that was first developed by: Duvall, Scott J. and J. Daniel Hays. (2005) *Grasping God's Word*. Michigan: Zondervan.

Inerrant or Historical Scripture?

(First, a disclaimer) I have made a commitment to present all sides of theological difficulties and disagreements as fairly as I am able, to allow Bible teachers from both the conservative and liberal sides to receive valuable resources to aid their instruction efforts. However, these important resources can only be presented by me upon a platform that is founded upon the inerrant Word of God. I am completely unable and unqualified to teach the things revealed by Scripture from a historical perspective alone, with the Truth of God ignored. Liberal Bible teachers should be aware of the full bias of my stance when teaching from these worksheets that are based upon my belief in the full Truth of God's Word revealed in Scripture. See Attachment 1 for "Inerrancy of Bible Belief Declared" for full understanding of my commitment to the Truth of Scripture as an added bonus of a foundational document to stir group discussion.

It is very probable that no more than half of all Christians believe the Bible to be both inspired by God and inerrant.² The Baptists, the Assemblies of God, and some Lutherans, and most Catholics declare the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Others, like the Anglican/Episcopal denominations, and the ELCA declare the Bible inspired, but with errors; they are joined with most scholars that scoff at such a notion as inerrancy of Scripture. Often, the debate of whether the Bible is inspired and inerrant is argued between the "conservative" "religious" view and the "liberal" "educated" view. ‘

It is important, though, to understand what is meant by the claim that the Bible is inspired, inerrant and authoritative. Those that hold to such belief are not declaring the different translations of the modern day Bible to be without error; rather, they believe the original manuscripts (autographs) written by God through men were without error, and contained His full authority and perfect Word. Sadly, mankind has found no original autographs and must rely upon carefully copied manuscripts. But, through the generations, we have found so many copies, that we are able to compare differences and arrive at the likely words first used in the very few cases where there is question. The most important thing to understand about any perceived errors that have been miscopied is that there is not one thing disputed that is critical to matters of faith. Most disagreements concern pronunciation or grammar usages, and they are very limited in number. A thorough study is included in this worksheet in the *Theological Difficulties* section; it is very important for Bible Teachers to take the

² It is difficult to find statistics on this matter that appear sound. There are different ideas concerning "inspiration" and "inerrancy" within different Christian beliefs, and statistics are useless in comparing this idea. Generally speaking, however, doctrinal beliefs of organized religion allow us to have an idea of probable belief; to be fully informed requires an examination of specific doctrine at a specific congregational or classroom level.

time to teach their students these vital things, whether a liberal or conservative view of the Bible is embraced.

My trust in the inspired and inerrant Scripture leads me to believe that it is a critical issue and important to the salvation of believers. Liberals that take the historical rather than literal approach to Scripture would disagree with me quickly and passionately.

There is one critical aspect that all Bible Teachers must accomplish if they are going to be great Christian leaders; their position concerning the authority of the Bible, its inspiration, and its inerrancy, must be told to the students before instruction of Scripture begins. It is very important! Bible Teachers cannot be effective unless their students address the text under the same propositions. There will be no learning if half of the students believe in full authority, and the other half of students believe in a non-literal interpretation; both sides of the issue cannot be taught in the same classroom because of complications that will arise almost immediately as students determine the importance of God's Word based upon this understanding. If this issue is not resolved at the beginning of a Bible Study, confusion will result, unless it is within a select, like-kind group from a congregation that toes the doctrinal position of their denomination and is gathered together to reaffirm each other rather than struggle with new growth through a mature learning process.

Bible Teachers, consider [Attachment #1](#) and declare your personal belief concerning the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of the Bible. It is only when the Bible Teacher and the student are on the same page concerning these important issues that real, deep, and mature learning can be accomplished. Regardless of your conservative, liberal, or moderate views of the authority of Scripture, you are welcome to use my document *Authority, Inspiration and Inerrancy of Bible Belief Declared* as a template to record your personal belief and share it with your Bible students. Hopefully, it focuses your thoughts upon your real beliefs and allows you to capture them in declarations that will be beneficial to your students as difficult concepts of Scripture are explored together.

One last critical note – Most Christians have not been under the tutorship of professional Bible Teachers. The first professional Bible Teacher they experience will most probably form their view of the Truth of Scripture which will be difficult to change once established. Liberal Bible Teachers that reject inerrancy of the Bible, can still support the Truth revealed in Scripture with a careful rejection of the few instances that seem conflicting. Please don't throw the baby out with the bathwater! Bible Teachers' work for the Lord is to teach the Bible; don't block God's Truth, and cause immature students lasting confusion, because of man's flawed interpretations and mistakes in copy!

Scripture Worksheet Data

Chapter/Verses

[Genesis 1:1-2](#)

Title

The Beginnings of Creation

King James Scripture

¹ ¶ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Hebrew/Greek Scripture

¹ בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:

² וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֵהוֹ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:

Important Ideas

Creation of the Heaven and Earth by the LORD God ([Genesis 1:1](#)) and Son of God ([John 1:1-5](#))

Pre-Creation state ([Genesis 1:2](#))

God's Creative Magnificence ([Isaiah 40:12](#))

Theological Significance

The LORD God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit Create all things, known and unknown by mankind

Scripture References

[Nehemiah 9:6 \(Exalt the Lord for His creation, who has made all things!\)](#)

³ *Lexham Hebrew Bible* (Logos Bible Software, 2012), Ge 1:1-2.

[Job 9:8 \(He spread out the Heavens and tread upon the sea\)](#)

[Job 37:14-18 \(Consider the wondrous works of the Lord\)](#)

[Job 38:4-11 \(God shows Job's Ignorance\)](#)

[Psalms 19:1 \(The Glory of God is declared by the heavens and His handiwork shown by His created firmament\)](#)

[Psalms 33:6-9 \(Praise to the Lord for who He is and does\)](#)

[Psalms 89:11 \(The world and its fullness were founded by Him\)](#)

[Psalms 95:5 \(The LORD God formed the Seas and the Dry Land with His Hands\)](#)

[Psalms 102:25 \(The foundations of the earth laid from old\)](#)

[Psalms 104 \(God's Preservation of Nature\)](#)

[Psalms 115:15-16 \(The Heavens are the LORD's\)](#)

[Psalms 136:5 \(He stretched out the earth above the waters; His mercy endures forever\)](#)

[Psalms 148:1-14 \(Let His Creation Praise its Creator\)](#)

[Proverbs 3:20 \(He established the heavens and by His knowledge the depths are broken up\)](#)

[Proverbs 8:22-31 \(Wisdom is everlasting\)](#)

[Ecclesiastes 3:11 \(The Lord made everything beautiful in His time\)](#)

[Ecclesiastes 11:1 \(Cast your bread upon the waters\)](#)

[Isaiah 40:12 \(The Majesty of the Lord\)](#)

[Isaiah 45:7 \(The Only Reference of God as Creator of Darkness and Evil\)](#)

[Isaiah 45:12 \(The LORD God commands the hosts in all His created Heavens\)](#)

[Jeremiah 10:12-13 \(The LORD God established the earth with wisdom through the utterance of His Word\)](#)

[Amos 9:6 \(He built His stories in Heaven and founded His troop in earth\)](#)

[John 1:1-5 \(All Things Made by the Word of God\)](#)

[Acts 14:15 \(Turn from vanities into the living Creator God\)](#)

[Colossians 1:6-17 \(The pre-eminent Christ\)](#)

[Hebrews 11:3 \(Faith assures us the worlds were framed by God\)](#)

[2 Peter 3:7 \(The Heavens and Earth are kept until the Day of Judgment\)](#)

Typological Significance

Water - The contemplative atmosphere experienced by the Triune God as he considered water at the beginning of Creation eventually represents the water given to His Chosen people. This water of Grace typologically represents the Will of the LORD God given freely to (thirsty) men. It is the influence and Spirit of God operating in man through grace, to regenerate, strengthen and refresh man's spiritual (inward) and natural (outward) life experience.

Keywords

Spirit, creation, beginning, heaven, earth, form, void, darkness, face, deep, water, creation ex nihilo, chaos, grace, inerrant, Word, restitution, gap, theory, time, young-earth, day-age, pre-creation, year-day, day-year, enuma elish, creationist, predictability, reproducibility, falsifiable testability, abiogenesis, microevolution, macroevolution, authoritative, inspired

Permanent Worksheet Link

<http://biblestudydata.com/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=298>

Words

Repetition of Words

God (אֱלֹהִים) (Elohim) (1, 2)

earth (הָאָרֶץ) (ares) (1, 2)

face (פָּנָי) (pene) (1, 2)

Contrasts

Heaven (שָׁמַיִם) (samayim) (1) and Earth (אָרֶץ) (ares) (1)

Cause and Effect

God created the heaven and the earth → Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters

Ronald Youngblood writes⁴ of a well-known model of creation that separates the first three days of God overcoming the lack of form and the next three days and parallel to them, God overcoming space in an ordered Creation act with an apparent cause and effect emphasis.⁵

Verbs

created בָּרָא

moved רָחַף

Paragraphs

General and Specific

God created the heaven and the earth → the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep

Purpose/Result Statements

God created the heaven and the earth → the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep

Means

The LORD God created the heaven and the earth ([Genesis 1:1](#))

The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters in His Creation process ([Genesis 1:2](#))

The Lord Jesus Christ was present and active in the Creation process ([John 1:1-5](#))

Actions/Roles of God

⁴ Ronald Youngblood, "Moses and the King of Siam," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 16, no. Fall (1973): 219.

⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 5)," *Bibliotheca sacra* 133, no. 529 (1976): 29. Day 1, 2, and 3 had unformed light, water, sky, land, and vegetation. Day 4, 5, and 6 had unfilled luminaries, fish, birds, beasts, and man.

God created the heaven and the earth ([Genesis 1:1](#))

The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters ([Genesis 1:2](#))

The Lord Jesus Christ was with God and made all things (The LORD God spoke His Word and Created all things through His Son); and without him there was not anything made that was made. (John 1:1-5)

Tone of the Passage

Dramatic

Discourses

Connections to Other Paragraphs and Episodes

[John 1:1-5](#) (KJV 1900)

“IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”

[Colossians 1:15-17](#) (KJV 1900)

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Shifts in the Story/Pivots

God Created → Then He moved

Each creative act in Genesis contains a basic pattern consisting of 1) Announcement (And God said...), 2) Command (Let it...), 3) Report (And it was so), 4) Evaluation: (And God saw that it was good), and 5) Temporal framework (And there was evening...).⁶

⁶ Claus Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 7.

Interchange

The deep (waters) was without form; it was void and dark. When the Spirit of God moves upon its face, God's Creation advances to [Genesis 1:3](#) with the separation of light from darkness.

Word Studies

Word Studies (Literal)

God made the heaven and earth, and the earth was disordered and without shape. Darkness was present on the deep. The Holy Spirit was active upon the waters.

Word Studies (Hebrew/Greek) with Semantic Domains

In the beginning – “8040 ראשית (rē(')·šît): n.fem.; ≡ Str 7225; TWOT 2097e—1. LN 68.1–68.10 what is first, the beginning, i.e., the initiation of an action, process, or state of being (Ps 111:10); 2. LN 67.65–67.72 the beginning, first of time, i.e., a point of time which is the beginning (non prior) in a duration (Ge 1:1); 3. LN 65.20–65.29 best, choice, i.e., that which is superior in value to all others in the same class or kind (Nu 24:20; Dt 33:21); 4. LN 53.16–53.27 firstfruit, i.e., the first portion of something which has been set aside in dedication and offering to God (Ne 12:44; Pr 3:9), note: for focus on the firstfruit as a food, see also domain LN 3.33–3.46.”⁷

God – “466 אֱלֹהִים (’ēlō·hîm): n.masc.; ≡ Str 430; TWOT 93c—1. LN 12.22 God, i.e., the true God, note: though the form is a grammatical plural, the meaning is singular and many sources think implies a majesty or stateliness (Ge 1:1); 2. LN 12.1–12.42 (pl.) gods, i.e., deities other than the true God, which are falsely worshiped (Dt 5:7; 1Ki 11:5, 33); 3. LN 6.96–6.101 idol, i.e., a worship object made of various materials (Ex 20:23; 34:17; Dt 4:28; 28:36; Da 11:8); 4. LN 37.48–37.95 mighty one, i.e., a person who is strong and capable, and so a leader or prominent one (Ge 23:6); 5. LN 56.20–56.34 judge, i.e., one who presides over a court session, or deals in arbitration (Ex 21:6, 7, 8); 6. LN 78.1–78.27 great, i.e., conflict which is intense and possibly on going in length, and so of a high degree of intensity (Ge 30:8); 7. LN 12.1–12.42 ghost, phantasm, spirit, i.e., a human spirit that makes an appearance from the Abode of the Dead (1Sa 28:13); 8. LN 12.1–12.42 heavenly beings, angels, i.e., a supernatural being, created, with a special focus on their power or nobility (Ps 8:6[EB 5]); 9. LN 87.19–87.57 majestic one, i.e., a person of high social status (Ps 36:8[EB 7]); 10. LN 79.18–79.23 mighty, majestic things, i.e., things of nature that are awesome and large,

⁷ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 8040.

majestic, and so awe-inspiring (Ps 68:16[EB 15]), see also domain LN 87.4–87.18; 11. LN 53.66–53.95 unit: אֱלֹהִים אִישׁ (’iš ’ēlō-hîm) prophet, i.e., a person who proclaims inspired utterances on behalf of God (Dt 33:1; 1Sa 9:6; 1Ki 13:1–31 passim), see also 468; 12. LN 12.1–12.42 unit: בֶּן אֱלֹהִים הֵּ (bēn hă- ’ēlō-hîm) heavenly being, angel, formally, son of God, i.e., a supernatural being, created, with a special focus of being in a unique class (Job 1:6); 13. LN 7.2–7.25 unit: אֱלֹהִים בַּיִת (bă-yit ’ēlō-hîm) shrine, i.e., a construction for worship (Jdg 17:5)”⁸

Created – “1343 I. בָּרָא (bā-rā(’)): v.; ≡ Str 1254; TWOT 278—1. LN 42.29–42.40 (qal) create, i.e., make something that has not been in existence before (Ge 1:1); (nif) be created (Ge 2:4); 2. LN 42.29–42.40 make, form or fashion something out of elements that exist (Ge 6:7; Isa 65:18; Jer 31:22); 3. LN 42.7–42.28 do, i.e., bring about, perform a task, with an emphasis on the uniqueness of the event (Ex 34:10; Nu 16:30; Isa 45:7); 4. LN 90.51–90.55 causes something to happen (Am 4:13); 5. LN 12.1–12.42 (qal act. ptcp.) the Creator, i.e., a title of a supernatural being (Ecc 12:1; Isa 40:28; 43:15+); 6. LN 13.67 unit: לֵב טָהוֹר יִי לִי בָרָא (bā-rā(’) l-i-y tã-hôr lēb) restore my purity, formally, make for me a pure heart, i.e., bring back to a prior state (PS 51:12[EB 10]+)”⁹

Heaven – “9028 שָׁמַיִם (šā-mă-yim): n.masc.; ≡ Str 8064; TWOT 2407a—1. LN 1.5–1.16 heaven, i.e., the realm of God where God abides, similar to the area of the sky, but with a focus of where God abides, sometimes describes as the upper regions above the upper sky (Ps 18:10[EB 9]); 2. LN 1.5–1.16 atmosphere, i.e., the area of the stars, skies, air, as a region above the earth including the horizon (1Ki 18:45); 3. LN 1.5–1.16 unit: שָׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם (šā-mă-yim šā-mă-yim) highest heaven, i.e., the very uppermost part of the sky, stars, and air (Dt 10:14); 4. LN 1.5–1.16 unit: אֶרֶץ הַּבַּיִת וְשָׁמַיִם הַּבַּיִת (bă-yin hă- šā-mă-yim w- bă-yin hă- ’ē-rěš) midair, formally, between the heavens and between the earth, i.e., an area of space just above the earth which has no base or support to set the feet (2Sa 18:9)”¹⁰

Earth – “824 אֶרֶץ (’ē-rěš): n.fem.; ≡ Str 776; TWOT 167—1. LN 1.39–1.45 world, earth, i.e., the surface of the earth, where humankind lives (Ge 1:28); 2. LN 1.60–1.68 land, ground, i.e., a dry surface in contrast to bodies of water (Ge 1:10); 3. LN 2.14–2.28 soil, dirt, i.e., the natural material of which the earth is made, some of which is suitable for planting (Lev 26:20); 4. LN 1.79–1.81 country, region, territory, i.e., specific large areas of the earth where distinct cultures or kingdoms dwell (Ge 12:1); 5. LN 9.1–9.23 people, i.e., a group or groups that live on the earth (Isa 37:18); 6. LN 80.1–80.4 space, i.e., an area of any size, inside or outside (Eze 42:6); 7. LN 1.1–1.4 unit: אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם (šā-mă-yim w- ’ē-rěš) total creation, formally, heaven and earth, i.e., the whole or totality of what God created (Ge 14:19); 8. LN 11.90–11.95 unit:

⁸ Ibid., 466.

⁹ Ibid., 1393.

¹⁰ Ibid., 9028.

אַרְצָא (’ě•pēs ’ě•rēs) very distant place, formally, ends of the earth, i.e., a very distant place, with a strong implication of peoples both physically and culturally distant (Dt 33:17; 1Sa 2:10; Ps 2:8; 22:28[EB 27]; 59:14[EB 13]; 67:8[EB 7]; 72:8; 98:3; Pr 30:4; Isa 45:22; Mic 5:3[EB 4]; Zec 9:10+); 9. LN 1.86–1.87 unit: אֶרֶץ זָרָה (’ě•rēs gezē-rā(h)) desert, formally, a solitary place, i.e., an infertile uninhabited land (Lev 16:22+); 10. LN 85.1–85.31 unit: אֶרֶץ קְהָל (yerē-kā(h)) ’ě•rēs) very far place, formally, ends of the earth (Jer 6:22); 11. LN 81.25–81.29 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ כְּבָרָה (keḇā-rā(h)) ḥā- ’ě•rēs) certain distance, i.e., a particular measurement of length, according to cognate analogies, about seven miles (12k.) (Ge 35:16; 48:7; 2Ki 5:19+), see WBC2:326; 12. LN 11.90–11.95 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ כְּנָף (kā-nāp ḥā- ’ě•rēs) very distant place, formally, ends of the earth, i.e., a very distant place, with a strong implication of peoples both physically and culturally distant (Job 37:3; Isa 11:2; 24:16); 13. LN 80.5–80.7 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ כְּנָף (kā-nāp ḥā- ’ě•rēs) border, formally, ends of the land, i.e., the extreme limits of a space (Eze 7:2); 14. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אֶרֶץ נְשִׁיָּה (’ě•rēs nešiy-yā(h)) Oblivion, Underworld, formally, land of forgetfulness, i.e., the nether world conceived as far from the LORD’s* presence (Ps 88:13[EB 12]+); 15. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אֶרֶץ (’ě•rēs) ... סֵדֶר לֹא (lō(’) sē-dēr) the Netherworld, the Underworld, formally, land of disorder, i.e., a region below the earth where the dead reside (Job 10:22+); 16. LN 1.39–1.45 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ עֵינַן (’ă•yin ḥā- ’ě•rēs) ground surface, formally, eye of the earth, i.e., a relatively large area of ground surface (Ex 10:5); 17. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אֶרֶץ עֵיפָה (’ě•rēs ’ē•pā(h)) 1 death, formally, land of darkness, i.e., the state of death as a figurative extension of the dark underworld (Job 10:22+); 18. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אֶרֶץ (’ě•rēs) ... צִלְמֹת (šāl•mā•wēt) place of death, formally, land of shadow, i.e., a place under the earth where the dead reside (Job 10:21); 19. LN 43 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ שְׂבַת (šāb•bāt ḥā- ’ě•rēs) volunteer produce, i.e., harvestable crops of all kinds that are grown as a result of natural processes and not intentional agricultural practices (Lev 25:6+); 20. LN 1.5–1.16 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ בֵּין הַ שָּׁמַיִם וְ הַ בֵּין הַ אֲרֶץ (bā•yin ḥā- šā•mā•yim w- bā•yin ḥā- ’ě•rēs) midair, formally, between the heavens and between the earth, i.e., an area of space just above the earth which has no base or support to set the feet (2Sa 18:9); 21. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ תְּהוֹם (tehôm ḥā- ’ě•rēs) Sheol, formally, depths of the earth, i.e., the place where the dead reside (Ps 71:20+); 22. LN 2.14–2.28 unit: אֶרֶץ עֶפְרָא (’ā•pār ’ě•rēs) soil, formally, dust of the land, i.e., material of the earth, suitable for farming (Job 14:19); note: for NIV text in 2Sa 7:23, see 1763”no base or support to set the feet (2Sa 18:9); 21. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אֶרֶץ הַ תְּהוֹם (tehôm ḥā- ’ě•rēs) Sheol, formally, depths of the earth, i.e., the place where the dead reside (Ps 71:20+); 22. LN 2.14–2.28 unit: אֶרֶץ עֶפְרָא (’ā•pār ’ě•rēs) soil, formally, dust of the land, i.e., material of the earth, suitable for farming (Job 14:19); note: for NIV text in 2Sa 7:23, see 1763”¹¹

Darkness – “3125 הַשֶּׁקֶל (hō•šēk): n.masc.; ≡ Str 2822; TWOT 769a—1. LN 14.53–14.62 darkness, the dark, i.e., the lack of light in a space (Ge 1:4; Ex 10:21), note: there are many associative meanings to “darkness,” including terror, ignorance, sadness, confusion, evil; 2. LN 79.26–79.38 blackness, i.e., the color of an object (Dt 4:11); 3. LN 28.68–28.83 unit: אוֹצַר הַשֶּׁקֶל (’ō•šār hō•šēk) valuable secrets, formally, treasures of darkness (Isa 45:3); 4. LN 22.1–22.14 unit: יוֹם הַשֶּׁקֶל (yôm hō•šēk) time of distress, formally, day of darkness (Job 15:23)”¹²

¹¹ Ibid., 824.

¹² ibid., 3125.

Face – “7156 פָּנָה (pā-ně(h)): n.masc.; ≡ Str 3942, 6440; TWOT 1782b—1. LN 8.9–8.69 face, i.e., the front part of the head, including main organs for perception and speech; eyes, mouth, etc. (Nu 12:14); 2. LN 8.9–8.69 mouth, i.e., a part of the face with jaws that open and close (Job 41:6[EB 14]); 3. LN 79.91–79.94 surface, face, i.e., the two dimensional area of an object usually conceived as on top (the surface) of the object (Ge 1:2; 2:6); 4. LN 24.1–24.51 appearance, formally, face, i.e., the form or characteristics of something as seen (Ecc 8:1); “5. LN 85.1–85.31 presence, i.e., the personal existence of something in a particular place or space, that usually interacts with objects around it (Ge 27:30; Ex 33:14); 6. LN 83.33–83.41 in front of, i.e., a spatial position which is located at the anterior or forepart of an object or area (Ex 7:10); 7. LN 67.17–67.64 formerly, before, i.e., pertaining to a point of time earlier in sequence (Ge 27:7; 1Ch 4:40), note: for NIV text in Nu 33:8, see 7084; 8. LN 22.42–22.47 unit: פָּנָה אֹרֶר (’ôr pā-ně(h)) look with favor, formally, make face shine, i.e., a request for favorable circumstances, and relief from trouble and danger (Nu 6:25; Ps 31:17[EB 16]; 67:2[EB 1]; 80:4[EB 3],8[EB 7],20[EB 19]; 119:135; Da 9:17+); 9. LN 58.14–58.18 unit: פָּנָה אֹרֶר (’ôr pā-ně(h)) bright countenance, formally, light of the face, i.e., an appearance of the face that shows positive, happy attitude (Job 29:24; Pr 16:15); 10. LN 22.42–22.47 unit: פָּנָה אֹרֶר (’ôr pā-ně(h)) favor, formally, light of the face, i.e., favorable circumstances, and relief from trouble and danger (Ps 4:7[EB 6]; 44:4[EB 3]); 11. LN 76 unit: פָּנָה אֶרְיָה (pā-ně(h) ’ă-r-yē(h)) strength, formally, face of a lion, i.e., the figurative extension of a lion’s power; 12. LN 34.1–34.21 unit: (piel) פָּנָה בְּקֶשׁ (bā-qăš pā-ně(h)) associate, be in association, formally, seek the face, i.e., be in relation to another as a figurative extension of seeking to be in the presence of that person (1Ch 16:11); 13. LN 25.251–25.269 unit: פָּנָה לִי דָאֶבְרָה דוּזַר (l- pā-ně(h) w dûš de ’ā-bā(h)) fear, formally, dismay goes before him, i.e., he instills fear (Job 41:14[EB 22] +); 14. LN 8.9–8.69 unit: פָּנָה דְלֶת (dē-lēt pā-ně(h)) jaw, formally, door of the mouth, i.e., the clenching part of the mouth (Job 41:6[EB 14]); 15. LN 15.165–15.186 unit: פָּנָה לִי הֵלֶךְ (hā-lăk l- pā-ně(h)) leader, formally, walk ahead, i.e., direct or guide a collection and so act. as a leader (Dt 10:11), see also domain LN 37.48–37.95; 16. LN 53.66–53.95 unit: (hitp) פָּנָה לִי הֵלֶךְ (hā-lăk l- pā-ně(h)) minister, serve, formally, walk before, i.e., give religious worship and service to deity, apparently as a figurative extension of walking in procession before a king or sacred representative (1Sa 2:30); 17. LN 22.21–22.28 unit: פָּנָה (pā-ně(h)) ... טָחַן (ṭā-ḥăn) (qal) extreme oppression, formally, grind the face (Isa 3:15+); 18. LN 33.291–33.293 unit: (hitp) פָּנָה יָצַב לִי (yā-šăb l- pā-ně(h)) confront, formally, stand before, i.e., speak words both announce and warn (Ex 8:16[EB 20]); 19. LN 39.18–39.20 unit: (hitp) פָּנָה יָצַב בְּ (yā-šăb b- pā-ně(h)) stand against, resist, i.e., to actively oppose or resist power (Dt 7:24); 20. LN 57.178–57.185 unit: (piel) פָּנָה כָּפַר (kā-păr pā-ně(h)) pacify, give a gift, formally, cover the face, i.e., give a gift of tribute which will establish some level of relationship, possibly implying reconciliation (Ge 32:21[EB 20] +); 21. LN 6.152–6.187 unit: פָּנָה לְבוּשׁ (pā-ně(h) leḅûš) coat, i.e., a garment specifically for outer garb (Job 41:5[EB 13]); 22. LN 53.16–53.27 unit: פָּנָה הֵם לֶחֶם (lē-ḥēm hā-pā-ně(h)) Bread of the Presence, i.e., a special bread as an offering (Ex 25:30); 23. LN 59.23–59.34 unit: פָּנָה מְגַמָּה (meġăm·mā(h) pā-ně(h) hēm) all, formally, assembling of their faces, i.e., the totality (Hab 1:9+), note: this is contextually synonymous with כֹּל (kōl) in prior clause, note: Lisowsky “striving?”; KB, BHS ftn cj is 4475; 24. LN 30.75–30.85 unit: פָּנָה נָכַר (nā-kăr pā-ně(h)) be prejudiced, be a friend, formally, recognize the face, i.e., make a decision based on factors other than the facts at hand, usually inferring that a party in a

dispute is a friend (Dt 1:17); 25. LN 87.19–87.57 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (nā·śā(‘) pā·ně(h)) show honor, formally, lift up the face, i.e., do actions attributing high status to another (La 4:16); 26. LN 31.14–31.25 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (nā·śā(‘) pā·ně(h)) accept, formally, lift up the face, i.e., consent or agree to conditions or terms (La 4:16); 27. LN 30.75–30.85 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (nā·śā(‘) pā·ně(h)) show partiality, have bias, be prejudiced, i.e., manifest the incorrect discrimination or preference of making of judgments based on factors other than the facts pertinent to a just decision (Mal 2:9); 28. LN 24.1–24.51 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (nā·śā(‘) pā·ně(h)) look up, formally, lift up the face (2Ki 9:32); 29. LN 30.75–30.85 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (hā·ďār pā·ně(h)) show partiality, have bias, be prejudiced in favor of, i.e., manifest the incorrect discrimination or preference of making of judgments based on factors other than the facts pertinent to a just decision (Lev 19:15); 30. LN 25.179–25.185 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (sā·bāb ‘ēt pā·ně(h)) sulk, formally, turn the face, i.e., be in an offended, angry mood (1Ki 21:4); 31. LN 88.223–88.226 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (qā·šě(h) pā·ně(h)) stubborn, obstinate, formally, hard of face, i.e., pertaining to being obdurate and not changing an attitude or behavior (Eze 2:4+); 32. LN 88.171–88.191 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (qal) אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (nā·pāl pā·ně(h)) downcast appearance, formally, sag, i.e., be in a state of a frowning, angry or disconcerted appearance (Ge 4:5, 6); 33. LN 88.171–88.191 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (hif) אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (nā·pāl pā·ně(h)) downcast appearance, formally, sag, i.e., be in a state of a frowning, angry or disconcerted appearance (Jer 3:12); 34. LN 8.9–8.69 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (‘ôr pā·ně(h)) face, formally, appearance of the skin, i.e., the part of the body of the eyes, nose, mouth, and cheeks (Ex 34:29); 35. LN 33.294–33.298 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (qal) אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (rā·‘ā(h) pā·ně(h)) advisor, formally, one looking in the face, i.e., one who tells another what to do or plan (2Ki 25:19); 36. LN 24.1–24.51 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (hă- l- pā·ně(h) hă- l- pā·ně(h)) reflect, to the face to the face, i.e., see something indirectly from a polished or naturally smooth surface (Pr 27:19), note: for NIV text in Nu 33:8, see 7084; note: further study may yield more domains.”¹³

Deep – “9333 תְּהוֹם (tehôm): n.fem. and masc.; ≡ Str 8415; TWOT 2495a—1. LN 1.17–1.25 the deep, the depths, i.e., an area below the surface of bodies of water, a dark, inaccessible, inexhaustible, and mysterious place controlled only by objects with vast powers (Ge 1:2; 7:11; 8:2; 49:25; Ex 15:5, 8; Dt 33:13; Job 28:14; 38:16, 30; 41:24[EB 32]; Ps 33:7; 36:7[EB 6]; 42:8[EB 7]; 77:17[EB 16]; 78:15; 104:6; 106:9; 107:26; 135:6; 148:7; Pr 3:20; 8:24, 27, 28; Isa 51:10; 63:13; Eze 26:19; Am 7:4; Jnh 2:6[EB 5]; Hab 3:10+), see also domain LN 81.3–81.11; 2. LN 1.69–1.78 deep springs, i.e., a body of water which comes out of the earth (Dt 8:7; Eze 31:4, 15+); 3. LN 1.17–1.25 unit: אָנָּה נִשָּׂא (tehôm hă- ‘ě-rěš) Sheol, formally, depths of the earth, i.e., the place where the dead reside (Ps 71:20+)”¹⁴

Without form – “9332 תְּהוֹ (tō·hû): n.masc.; ≡ Str 8414; TWOT 2494a—1. LN 80.1–80.4 formlessness, emptiness, i.e., a state of empty space and so nothingness, so not having a

¹³ Ibid., 7156.

¹⁴ Ibid., 9333.

shape, implied to be a state prior to order and form (Ge 1:2; Job 26:7; Isa 45:18; Jer 4:23+), see also domain LN 58.14–58.18; 2. LN 1.86–1.87 wasteland, i.e., what is barren and void of use, as tracts of unpopulated land (Dt 32:10; Job 6:18; 12:24; Ps 107:40+); 3. LN 6.96–6.101 idol, i.e., an object which are worshiped, with a special focus on the uselessness and worthlessness of the fashioned object (1Sa 12:21+); 4. LN 20.31–20.60 ruination, destruction, i.e., what has been destroyed and in chaos and confusion (Isa 24:10; 34:11+); 5. LN 65.1–65.16 vanity, nothingness, i.e., what is worthless and lacking in value, implying a very low status in some contexts (Isa 40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 45:19; 49:4+); 6. LN 33.251–33.255 false testimony, i.e., speech which is empty and void of truth, so false in reasoning or facts (Isa 29:21; 59:4+).”¹⁵

Void – “983 בְּהוּ (bō·hû): n.[masc.]; ≡ Str 922; TWOT 205a—1. LN 14 emptiness, the void, i.e., an emptiness that shows lack of order (Ge 1:2; Jer 4:23+), note: some interp this as a void from a prior creation, see WBC₁:5; 2. LN 14 unit: בְּהוּ וְתוֹהוּ (tōhw w- bō·hû) total chaos, i.e., a physical state of total lack of order (Ge 1:2; Jer 4:23+), note: some give the associative meaning of this chaos as a contest of deities, see WBC₁ for discussion; 3. LN 20.31–20.60 unit: בְּהוּ אֶבֶן (’ē·bēn bō·hû) plumb line of desolation, i.e., a figurative and ironic meaning of destruction (Isa 34:11+), note: the irony is, of course, that a plummet line is normally used for construction not destruction and the chaos that is associated with destruction”¹⁶

Moved upon the face of the waters - As the Spirit of God moves across the waters, the verb to express that is מְרַחֵף “merahepet” in the sense of hovering. This Hebrew word is used as an eagle hovering over a nest in a protective and supervisory fashion. “8173 I. רָחַף (rā·hăṣṣ): v.; ≡ Str 7363; TWOT 2148, 2149—1. LN 16 (qal) tremble, shake, quiver, i.e., the quick, non-linear, back and forth motion of an object (Jer 23:9+), note: for another interp, see 8174; 2. LN 15.245 (piel) hover, i.e., a non-linear flying motion of an object which is stationary above a surface, with a possibly associative meaning of caring superintendence over an object (Ge 1:2; Dt 32:11+), see also domain LN 16.”¹⁷

Water – “4784 מַיִם (mă·yim): n.masc.; ≡ Str 4325; TWOT 1188—1. LN 2.7–2.13 water, i.e., the liquid which is common to all life, of various contents, amounts, sources, etc. (1Sa 7:6); note: in Isa 48:1 for NIV text, see 4784; note: for MT text in Na 3:8, see 4946 + 3542; 2. LN 14.10–14.14 rain, i.e., water drops from the clouds (2Sa 21:10); 3. LN 14.10–14.14 flood, i.e., a very great event of destructive water (Job 27:20); 4. LN 1.69–1.78 the sea, i.e., a relatively large body of water (Ps 18:16[EB 15]); 5. LN 1.69–1.78 river, i.e., a flowing body of water (Am 5:24); 6. LN 8.70–8.77 tears, i.e., a body fluid liquid which comes from the eyes (Ps 119:136);

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 9332.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 983.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 8173.

La 1:16; 3:48), note: often a sign of personal distress; 7. LN 1.69–1.78 pool, i.e., a reservoir of water (Jer 41:12); 8. LN 8.70–8.77 unit: רִגְלַי מֵיִם שֵׁוִי (šă-yin mă-yim rě-gěł) urine, formally, urine water at the feet, i.e., a product of bodily waste (2Ki 18:27; Isa 36:12); 9. LN 14.10–14.14 unit: מַיִם זֶרְמִים (zě-rěm mă-yim) driving rain, formally, storm of water (Isa 28:2)”¹⁸

Use of Conjunctions - The conjunctions introducing [Genesis 1:2, 3](#), are different. [Genesis 2:3](#) has an apparent *waw* that denotes a sequential clause in Hebrew, but not one that is independent. [Genesis 1:2](#) is missing this sequential conjunction; this makes it highly improbable that Moses was suggesting sequence in the construction of [Genesis 1:2](#) since it is left out according to Waltke (Part 2; p. 140).¹⁹

The tendency to group these different acts together as a conglomeration of the creation by God in one magnificent span of purposed activity clearly removes the deeper mysteries and revelations within the Word of God concerning His creation.²⁰ Once individual words are grouped in such a way, typological and symbolical interpretations are prevented. Though Waltke is correct in declaring the LORD God as creator of all things, he errs in assuming that all creation was accomplished in the same ways (from nothing) by disregarding clear evidence of different ways revealed in Genesis 1 through the use of distinctive verbs.

Word Studies (Peculiar)

Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith - In his King Follett Discourse, Joseph Smith (Mormon Latter Day Saint Prophet), “conjecturally emended” the Hebrew contained within Genesis 1:1 to reflect that “*Berosheit*” meant that the head God brought forth other Gods in a grand council and contemplatively ordered the creation of the worlds that was already in existence at that time.²¹ Accordingly, the Gods determined to create something new out of

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 4784.

¹⁹ As expressed in the *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York; London; Toronto; Melbourne; Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1917), 8.

²⁰ Oddly, Waltke refers to Ronald Youngblood’s article “Moses and the King of Siam,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 16 (Fall 1973): 213, that speaks of the first three days God’s overcoming of the lack of form, and the next three days God’s overcoming the emptiness of space, both based upon the Hebrew word בָּרָא. Waltke calls this an example of God’s ordered creation with acts such as spatial separation that add parallelism between the two sets of three-day creations confirming God’s full participation in the creation. It seems conflictive to pronounce the same meaning of all parts of God’s creation to show creation ex nihilo, while at the same time compare different processes that God used to create. Waltke, “Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 5),” 29-30.

²¹ Kevin L. Barney, “Joseph Smith’s Emendation of Hebrew Genesis 1:1,” *Dialogue* 30, no. 4 (1997): 104, 120. It is hypothesized by Ehat and Cook that the Prophet believed *re’shiyth* should have been two words (*re’sh* and *shiyth*) with a letter dropped; this changed the meaning of *shiyth* to “bring” and *re’sh* to “head.”

the chaos already in place. Smith mocks the educated scholars concerning their belief in “*creation ex nihilo*” and their condemnation of his belief that declares the word “*baurau*” does not mean to create out of nothing, but to organize.²² Traditionally, the Mormon Church acknowledged Smith’s error of Hebrew translation; recent scholarship is moving toward Smith “experimenting” with his teachings by making a modest textual expansion of Genesis 1:1 to guide his followers at their level of understanding.²³

Word Studies Translations (Bible Versions)

King James “Authorized” Version - Genesis 1:1-2 (KJV)

“IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”²⁴

New King James Version – Genesis 1:1-2 (NKJV)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”²⁵

New International Version – Genesis 1:1-2 (NIV)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”²⁶

Douay-Rheims Bible (Catholic) – Genesis 1:1-2

“IN the beginning God created heaven, and earth.

²² *ibid.*, 105. Modern Day Mormon Leaders acknowledge that Joseph Smith’s Hebrew translation of Genesis 1:1 is incorrect; however, they justify this mistake by explaining that the Prophet was conjecturing in order to teach those that had lesser understanding than himself.

²³ *ibid.*, 135.

²⁴ *The King James Study Bible* (Liberty University: Thomas Nelson, Inc. , 1988).

²⁵ *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ge 1:1-2.

²⁶ *The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Genesis 1:1-2.

2 And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters.”²⁷

The Living Bible (Paraphrased) – Genesis 1:1-2

“When God began creating the heavens and the earth, 2the earth was a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the Spirit of God brooding over the dark vapors.”²⁸

American Standard Version – Genesis 1:1-2 (1901 ASV)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

GOD’S WORD Translation – Genesis 1:1-2 (Natural English)

“1 In the beginning God created heaven and earth.
2 The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep water. The Spirit of God was hovering over the water.”²⁹

The Holman Christian Standard Bible – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.”³⁰

The Lexham English Bible – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth— 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.”³¹

²⁷ *Douay-Rheims Holy Bible, Translated from the Latin Vulgate* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), Ge. 1:1-2.

²⁸ Kenneth Nathaniel Taylor, *The Living Bible, Paraphrased* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1997), Ge 1:1-2.

²⁹ *God’s Word Translation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 1995), Ge 1:1-2.

³⁰ *The Holy Bible: Holman Christian Standard Version* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2009), Ge 1:1-2.

³¹ W. Hall Harris III, *The Lexham English Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), Ge 1:1-2.

The Net Bible – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

1:2 Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water.”³²

New American Bible Revised Edition (Catholic) – Genesis 1:1-2 (NABRE)

“In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth—² *and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters”³³

New American Standard Bible (1995 Update) – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

² The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”³⁴

New Century Version – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the sky and the earth. ² The earth was empty and had no form. Darkness covered the ocean, and God’s Spirit was moving over the water.”³⁵

New Living Translation – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* ² The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.”³⁶

New Revised Standard Version – Genesis 1:1-2 (NRSV)

³² *The Net Bible First Edition* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 1:1-2.

³³ *New American Bible Revised Edition* (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Ge 1:1-2.

³⁴ *New American Standard Bible* (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Ge 1:1-2.

³⁵ *The Everyday Bible: New Century Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 2005), Ge 1:1-2.

³⁶ Tyndale House Publishers, *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*, 3rd ed. (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007), Ge 1:1-2.

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.”³⁷

The Revised Standard Version – Genesis 1:1-2 (RSV)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.”³⁸

The Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition – Genesis 1:1-2 (RSVCE)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.”³⁹

Today’s New International Version – Genesis 1:1-2 (TNIV)

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”⁴⁰

Young’s Literal Translation – Genesis 1:1-2

“In the beginning of God’s preparing the heavens and the earth— 2 the earth hath existed waste and void, and darkness is on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God fluttering on the face of the waters.”⁴¹

Word Studies (Typology and Shadows)

³⁷ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), Ge 1:1-2.

³⁸ *The Revised Standard Version* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc. , 1971), Ge 1:1-2.

³⁹ Catholic Biblical Association (Great Britain), *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition* (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994), Ge 1:1-2.

⁴⁰ *The Holy Bible: Today's New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), Ge 1:1-2.

⁴¹ Robert Young, *Young's Literal Translation* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997), Ge 1:1-2.

Water - The Spirit of the LORD God existed before the heavens and the earth and before the LORD God created the heaven and the earth, there was a great and deep abyss of surging water.

The waters that existed before the heavens and the earth was a place that the Spirit of the LORD God moved upon. When the Spirit of God came to these waters, He was relaxed and contemplative. This surging and moving water where the Spirit of the LORD God came to relax and contemplate, is the beginning of His plans for creation. All creation accomplished by the LORD God originates from this moving water, and His Plans for His Creation uses water as the basis for all He does. His Creation was based on these waters, and plays a central part in our relationship to Him, and His relationship to us. Water is a central point in all of the LORD God's plans. It is crucial to understand the relevance of water to the LORD God, if you are to understand and know Him.

The relaxing and contemplative atmosphere received by the LORD God through water eventually is the water given to His Chosen people and typologically represents the Will of the LORD God given freely to (thirsty) men. It is the influence and Spirit of God operating in man through grace, to regenerate, strengthen and refresh man's spiritual (inward) and natural (outward) life experience.

Because we know how the LORD God uses water for man's regeneration, strengthening and refreshment, we can glimpse at how He felt as He moved upon the surging water. We can know that he felt regenerated, strengthened and refreshed, because He offers us the same gift through water now. It is the powerful water that influences and moves the Spirit of the LORD God to create. Without this rushing water, the creation of the heavens and earth, might not have ever been. It is through the contemplation of the rushing waters that moved the LORD God to create, and it was rushing waters that moved God to base all life on.

[Meaning and Application](#)

Meaning of Text for Biblical Audience

Early people received traditional, oral, mythological accounts of the creation and about the great flood. Many elements of Scripture accounts are interlaced within these myths. In an odd association, social myths are to the reality of Scripture as what TV is to a textbook. Though both are representative, only one is sure; regardless, those only able to assimilate myths were still informed of the value of human lives over all other creatures, and the expectation of higher rights than any other level of creation that existed in their world.

Early Israelites possibly identified the LORD God as the Canaanite God of heaven El, who is called “the Creator of the earth.”⁴² Example of this might be seen in Abraham’s meeting with Melchizedek, who blessed him in the name of El Elyon (אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ), maker of heaven and earth in Genesis 14:19. Traditional and mythological religious belief systems seem to enhance complex monotheistic theology that developed in the first Israelites; those functions identified first with the Canaanite God El, are transferred to the omnipotent LORD God as contact with His people developed their relationship.⁴³ Thus, hearers of Genesis 1:1-2 possibly imagined an enhanced version of traditional Canaanite mythological viewpoints until their understanding and recognition of the LORD God matured into the period of the monarchs.

Differences between Biblical Times and Ours

Early people thought the cosmos was a firmament separated by waters above them and below them, with human activity at its center. Modern-day Christians have more knowledge of the universe because of scientific exploration and analysis. So, when early Christians heard Genesis 1:1-2 read, they might have had a different vision in their heads than modern-day Christians have. Though the text shows God as Creator of the Universe to both groups of people, the vivid imagery would be effected by the amount of myth or reality that informs knowledge.

Theological Principles Communicated by Passage

The LORD God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are Creators of all things.

Application of Theological Principles

The LORD God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit must be part of any creation idea, whether it be scientific theory or religious doctrine. It is every Christian’s responsibility to defend this fact of God as “First Cause” at the least.

Theological Difficulties

Inerrant or Historical Scripture

The Holy Bible was written by various human beings, inspired by God to reflect His perfect Word and His full authority; this is the belief of most Conservative Christians. Most liberal Christians and Scholars take a more historical attitude and look to Scripture as a record of

⁴² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 10.

⁴³ *ibid.*

past things that recorded the opinions of men and the movements of God, all from the perspective of writings made by mere humans capable of making error and reflecting bias.

It is critical for students of the Bible know the perspective of either inerrancy or historicity views of their Bible Teacher. It is only then can a student know how to gauge the teachings and on what level and import the teacher's instruction should be considered.

Old Testament - The Old Testament was written in the living language Hebrew. This Semitic language was spoken before the time of Christ and is still spoken today; it has generally remained the same even through some notable stages of development. A well-educated speaker of Hebrew can understand the earliest stages of Hebrew words to Modern Hebrew today.⁴⁴ Evidence of the earliest pre-history of Hebrew has been found in archaeological remains and the uniformity of the language over 3500 years has been confirmed.⁴⁵

The different stages of Hebrew development account for many arguments for the few differences in translation. When the different Old Testament books of the Bible were written down in manuscripts (known as "autographs") there were no vowels. This period of no vowel usage extended to the tenth century BC. Dedicated Jewish scribes copied letter for letter, with careful attention to precisely capture each letter perfectly, onto other manuscripts so the Books could be read by others.

The second stage, known as "*matres lectionis*" inserted vowel letters into the copies to aid in reading. During the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls (c. 150-B.C. – A.D. 70) and the Mishnaic period (until about A.D. 400) vowel usage increased.

The third stage was the period in which the scribes added "vowel points" to the manuscripts to help others to read the texts out loud with the correct pronunciation. These vowel points were placed below, upon the top or at the left of the original consonants, in order that the consonants remained unchanged from their original text. Vowel points were added several centuries after the last book of the OT by three different groups of scholars, the Palestinian, Babylonian, and Tiberian.⁴⁶ It is the Tiberian, developed by the Masoretes during the period A.D. 500-950 that uses the standard vowel markings today.

Obvious changes to Biblical Hebrew are noticed in postbiblical Hebrew history. The Qumran community (around 200 B.C.), the Mishnaic Hebrew (Rabbis beginning around A.D. 200), the Talmudic period of Medieval Hebrew (c. 500-600) and Modern Hebrew

⁴⁴ Bruce K. and M. O'Connor Waltke, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 4.

⁴⁵ Lee M. Fields, *Hebrew for the Rest of Us* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 13.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

(since c. 1700) utilized the well-copied manuscripts in their individual eras, adding ideas and commentaries to the various meanings of text. Though they did not change the text, the emphasis was often debated, with various schools of thought highlighting areas of interest to them; these different ideas became the teachings that garnered debate that has lasted even until modern day.

We know that the Hebrew Old Testament manuscript copies did not change from one time period until another because archaeologists have found a great deal of them. Complete manuscripts, and partial manuscripts have given modern day translators assurances that the copies from original autographs traveled well through history; very little differences are found, and those differences are often the account of misspellings, different vowel pointers, changes in order, or word insertion/omission. As more manuscripts are found, minute differences of wording are able to be finely honed as comparisons with each other are made. (As these Becker Bible Teacher worksheets progress, I will make sure that the places where misinterpretation effects the translation are fully known and understood so Bible Teachers can be confident concerning these things.)

New Testament – Just as the Old Testament, there are no existing autographs of the New Testament that have been found to date. They were probably lost during times of persecution, normal wear and tear, or destroyed after copies were made. Dr. Elmer Towns suggests the possibility that God allowed the autographs to vanish to prevent veneration and worship as relics.⁴⁷

Some New Testament books were written on prepared animal skins called parchment. Others were written on papyrus (*chartas*) sheets made from reed. Rolled parchment would crack and break, unlike animal skins; so, early copyists put sheets of parchment together in a book form and called it a *codex*. Some New Testament books were written by the attributed author, and others by an “amanuensis” scribe, with the author signing the manuscript to authenticate it.⁴⁸

New Testament books were collected together to form a New Testament Bible for many reasons. The Old Testament had already been collected into 39 Books, which led Christians to gather their “inspired by God” writings together. Every Christian alive at that time wanted their copy of these writings. As the apostles began to die, desire increased to possess their actual writings. Just as the Hebrew scribes copied diligently the works of past, so did the Greeks, carefully making mostly perfect copies of copies of manuscripts so that churches and fortunate Greeks could hold the authoritative Word of God and His expression through Christ that is captured in the New Testament.

⁴⁷ Elmer L. Towns, "Theology 201 Lecture, Module 2, Lesson 8, "Preservation: Insuring the Authenticity of the Text", " (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2007).

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

Today, we have over 40,000 manuscripts. The uncial manuscripts, written in all capital letters date to A.D. 200. The minuscule manuscripts, with small letters, began production around A.D. 900. Over 8,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate have been found in various degrees of completeness. Many *ostraca*, broken pieces of pottery on which the poor wrote Scripture quotations have been found in garbage dumps in the Mediterranean world.

When conservative Christians speak of the Bible being inerrant, authoritative, and inspired, they are referencing the original autographs that human beings wrote through the movement of God. Further, they have confidence that from the time of their writings to modern day, that God has moved His Scripture forward with a guarding of the Words that match the essence of the earliest known copies. While different beliefs order or choose different books within their Bible, conservative Christians declare the 39 commonly received books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, each as they were originally composed to be inerrant, authoritative and inspired. (See Attachment 1)

The Age of Scripture

Conservative theology dates the writing of Moses' five books of the Old Testament to 1450 BC and the completion of the New Testament around 65 AD; thus the Bible was written between in 1500-1600 years.⁴⁹ They believe the Bible to be written by forty different authors that were divinely inspired by God as they captured different levels of His Truth with inerrant words written through them by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:10). These Words of God transcend above human effort with supernatural revelation, wholly consistent in its parts, and without error. All 66 Books of the Bible reflect the Lord Jesus Christ with consistent symbols and doctrine throughout.

Liberal theology assessment assigns 700 years to the completion of the Bible, with the Old Testament written around 600 BC and the New Testament completed in 100 AD. They read Scripture as an anthology which brings selected writings together in a collection with no expectation of coherence, no consistency of symbols, and possible contradictions between individual Books. Liberals classify the Bible as sacred writings from ancient times; they do not believe Scripture to be inerrant.

The disagreement between liberal and conservative Christians and Scholars is subjective; the actual dates of Scripture writing will possibly be narrowed down to more specific times (possible future archaeological finds) but it is doubtful that an exact date will ever be known. Scripture, first written by Moses in the second millennium BC, was inspired by God, possibly through the recording of some oral traditions that the Lord used to focus Moses on the word he was to write.

⁴⁹ The first Scripture that was ever written was accomplished by the finger of God on the Ten Commandment tablets at Sinai.

It should really be a non-issue for Bible Teachers, who are tasked with so much material to teach, that there is little time to address this topic. It is not a crucial topic and it does not affect salvation, faith or relationship with the Lord in our lack of objective evidence. However, it is important for the Bible Teacher to be aware because it is sometimes a goto argument by liberal Scholars and conservative Christians when they make a stance for the inerrancy of Scripture. The argument for inerrancy is not affected one way or the other by this position, and it is not worth the time it takes to argue. I have provided the closest dates of both positions to the Bible Teacher in order to provide informed instruction to inquisitive Bible Students; but, this teaching should be brief and to the point so the students can move on to more important learning.

Cosmogony: Science or Scripture

Discussion and belief concerning the development of the universe and life within it was centered upon the biblical account beginnings in Genesis 1 until about one hundred years ago.⁵⁰ D. F. Payne, a pro-creation Theologist, organized the turn away from the Scriptural truth of Genesis and the embrace of scientific explanations into three distinct attacks against God.⁵¹ The first he accredited to the Darwin hypothesis that drew most of the scientific community who thought his theory more provable than the Bible's account.⁵² The second attack upon the veracity of Scripture was initiated by comparative religionists that connected Near East mythological accounts⁵³ of creation to the story of creation in the Bible.⁵⁴ Thirdly, the persuasive argument of Julius Wellhausen in his 1878 work

⁵⁰ Bruce K. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part I)," *Bibliotheca sacra* 132, no. 525 (1975): 25.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² D. F. Payne, *Genesis One Reconsidered* (London: Tyndale Press, 1962).

⁵³ Ashurbanipal's Nineveh library contained the ancient myth entitled *Enuma Elish* that began with the words "When on high" that is sometimes compared to "In the beginning" that Genesis 1:1 starts. Further, twelve myths from Sumer, India, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Canaan express a repressive monster restraining creation. This anti-creation monster is identified in Near East myths as "Rahab" or "Leviathan" that is also imaged in Scripture that is connected to the Creation account such as Job 3:8, Isaiah 51:9, and Psalm 89:10. This similarity convinces many outside the receipt of revelation and faith from the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that Genesis 1 is merely another myth; however, analyzers must stretch those connections past the place of reliable evidence and fail to objectively confirm reasoned convictions (Waltke, 28-32). Rather, inerrant Scripture often captures familiar imagery of the ancient time to express vivid, colorful spiritual ideas that support God's Truth in ways that understanding can be realized according to John L. McKenzie, "A Note on Psalm 73," *Theological Studies* 2, (1950): 281-282. It is not borrowed mythological theology but borrowed imagery that Scripture uses in some of its expressions according to the Th.M. thesis of Ronald Barclay Allen, "The Leviathan-Rahab-Dragon Motif in the Old Testament" (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1968), 63.

⁵⁴ Payne.

Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel that there are two distinct accounts in Genesis 1 and 2, that are so contradictory, that they should not be believed.⁵⁵ Educators embraced the idea that the scientific viewpoint of creation and that reflected in Genesis 1:1-2:4a are incompatible; thus, by the year 1900, the accuracy, inspiration, and consistence of the Bible were thought to be false, according to Zimmern and Cheyne in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* article on "Creation".⁵⁶

From that point on, the unproven theories of evolutionary science were given more weight than the account of Creation according to Scripture. The 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries encouraged enlightenment based upon reason that used empirical observation and analysis, with a rejection of faith in the inerrancy of Scripture.⁵⁷

The world was left spiritually bankrupt; even Christian Theologists were uncertain to the meaning of Genesis 1:1-2.⁵⁸ The Christian view that states God as the First Cause of all things conflicted with the world view that science trumped myth of which Scripture was wrongly credited.⁵⁹

Different Theories:

Myth – The super-rationalistic era of human thought often defined past myths in derogatory terms⁶⁰ that identified them as folk tales of the ignorant. However, as we emerge from this predisposition to negate myths, scholars now recognize myths as stories of the earth that attempt to apprehend reality above understanding it to make an effort to participate fully in life realities.⁶¹ The Creation accounts of lore traditionally declare human life to be sacred beings derived from God.⁶² According to Buck, even unbelievers cherish the myths that confirm inalienable rights of humans with unrealized acknowledgment that

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part I)," 26.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, 29.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 28-32.

⁵⁹ It is possible for science and faith to coexist within the context of the origin of Creation. The belief that the Bible is inerrant and contains the complete Truth of God that is not contradicted by known, objective and measurable scientific facts is the position of Becker Bible Studies author and teacher Kathy L. McFarland and is a focused teaching point throughout the study of Genesis 1. For further education, see Biologos.org.

⁶⁰ Harry Merwyn Buck, "Creation Stories and Creation Science," *Anima* 8, no. 2 (1982): 114.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁶² *ibid.*, 114-115.

these rights affirm the superiority of man over all other life forms, which then gives legitimate power structure its form in society.⁶³

Early societies perceived the cosmos as a firmament separated by waters above and below, with a space for human activity at its center.⁶⁴ The Babylonian creation epic *Enuma Elish* is just one of many creation stories that seem similar to the biblical account of Creation;⁶⁵ early secular myths reflect some reality of Scriptural Truth as cultural stories are developed to explain the oral traditions passed down through the generations.

Karl Barth explains the nature of myths:

“Real myth has never really had creation as its theme and object. Myth does, of course, take narrative form, and it is often far more dramatic and lyrical than the biblical creation sagas. But its tales and their events and figures are obviously pictures and embodiments of what happens always and everywhere and to that extent does not happen “anywhere or at any time.” Not without a nod and a wink, ironically, condescendingly, by way of accommodation, myth tells a story “for children and those who love children.” It chooses and uses the form of a story, but in the case of all intelligent persons it makes the demand that they should look through this story, that they should not cling to it as such, but that in all the enjoyment of its events and forms, spurred on by its cheerful play, they should press on to its true non-historical, timeless and abstract sense, to a perception of the eternal truth in the play. How can we understand myth if we ignore this demand and do not try to meet it? Myth has always arisen and still arises from the higher recognition, divination and poetic understanding of this kind of eternal truth. ...It can and will be genuinely understood only when the way of its origin is in some sense retraced by the hearer or reader; only when the web of its narrative is again thoughtfully and yet imaginatively and feelingly analysed and reduced to its non-historical and timeless and abstract sense. Genuine myth makes use of the form of creation saga. But it only makes use of it. Even in the form of creation saga it can never have the real creation for its object.”⁶⁶

⁶³ *ibid.*, 115.

⁶⁴ Harry Merwyn Buck, *People of the Lord: The History, Scriptures, and Faith of Ancient Israel* (Macmillan, 1966).

⁶⁵ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics - the Doctrine of Creation Iii.1* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Marketing, LLC, 1958, 2010), 87. Karl Barth speaks of the direct dependent relationship between the passages of Genesis 1 and 2 and the Babylonian myths material agreement that falls short of God’s Truth revealed in the His inerrant Word.

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 85.

As the Greek mythological world began with chaos, the stories seemed familiar to the creation by God through the use of common concepts; St. Paul took advantage of these traditional myth concepts to educate Greek listeners about the Kingdom of God that is revealed through Scripture. Thus, stories of traditional myths spoke to its hearers in familiar tales easily understood that prepared later generations for a deeper understanding of Scripture revealed by God.

Literal (Young Earth Creationists) – Many conservative believers and young earth creationists declare the earth's age to be no older than 10,000 years when Genesis is interpreted literally.⁶⁷ Geological and astronomical evidence that seems to support a very old earth is argued by them that actually God created the appearance of age in His Creation.⁶⁸ The date 4004 BC as the original Creation date was established by James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, in *his Annales Veteris et novis testament* (1650-54), and this date was then incorporated into the margin commentary of the King James Bible.⁶⁹ The traditional modern-day Creationist movement of literal interpretation of Genesis originated in 1923 after the publication of George McCready Price's book *The New Geology*.⁷⁰ The Young Earth view is the traditional exegesis of Genesis 1 by Jewish and Christian conservatives who accuse dissenters of denying the authority of Scripture.⁷¹

There are at least four types of evolutionary-type beliefs that have also formed in modern-day concerning the Creation by God:

Darwinian Evolution - The first, supported by most secular biologists, is Darwinian evolution and the survival of the fittest beginning in the soupy waters upon a young earth. According to generalized, modern day, scientific opinion, organic molecules formed first in primeval oceans, then progressed into life from molecule to cell, and then to multicellular organism with life becoming increasingly complex and diverse. At some point, advanced organisms crawled out of the waters according to biologists, and evolved into the different species of animals. It was the survival of the fittest that culled faulty genes (genetic mutation) and placed the strongest animals in reproductive cycles to propagate their kind (natural selection), and changing original, inherited characteristics within

⁶⁷ C. John Collins, "How Old Is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1-2:3," *Presbyterion* 20, no. 2 (1994): 110.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 111.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 110 footnote 8.

⁷⁰ David H. Bailey, "Creationism and Intelligent Design: Scientific and Theological Difficulties," *Dialogue* 43, no. 3 (2010): 63.

⁷¹ Collins, "How Old Is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1-2:3," 111.

species, organisms, and molecules (DNA and proteins) to diversify, specialize, and adapt within biological populations (evolution).

Physics lecturer Hugh Henry of Northern Kentucky and Old Testament Professor Daniel J. Dyke of Cincinnati Christian University co-authored an informative paper that suggests the Theory of Evolution to reflect mythology more than it does actual science.⁷² They observe that three critical elements of scientific method, predictability, reproducibility, and falsifiable testability cannot be met. But, when the theory of abiogenesis, microevolution, and macroevolution are reviewed naturally, it conforms to the characteristic of a myth that explains the universe in a way that develops a belief structure that can be supported by a community.

Creationists often suggest that there are important physical, chemical, and biological mechanisms that cannot be found in the natural science models of creation, and those missing pieces show God in the gaps.⁷³ Even Newton invoked the God-of-the-Gaps to explain his theory of gravity that held irregularities; later scientists determined that it was not the intervention of God, but rather, a mistake made in Newton's theory.⁷⁴ As knowledge in natural science develops new theories and techniques, science proves its theories to fill in the gaps once credited to God alone. Bonhoeffer declares this fallacy of putting God between the unknown sciences of the day to fill in missing information must be avoided, with God placed at the "center of our life rather than the end of our resources."⁷⁵

Dr. Charles Detwiler, a Reductionist Biologist and Liberty University Lecturer and Head, explains that evolution has been tested a thousand times in different fields and logically should be proclaimed "good theory."⁷⁶ However, "in the course of testing the theory of evolution it has become so embellished, with so many specialized facets and exceptions, that there is no longer any way the theory can be experimentally falsified" to prove the veracity of the hypothesis.⁷⁷ Thus, materialists avoid devising tests to disprove the theory of evolution because it would be a lost effort; any result unfavorable to the theory would

⁷² Hugh Henry and Daniel J. Dyke, "Evolution as Mythology: Is the Modern Theory of Evolution Science or Myth?," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 13, no. 1 (2010): 47.

⁷³ Richard H. Bube, "Man Come of Age: Bonhoeffer's Response to the God-of-the-Gaps," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 14, no. 4 (1971): 207.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁶ Charles Detwiler, *Biology 101 Lectures* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2007), "Spiritual: Life Can Be Understood," Slide 9.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

simply be modified in a way to accept new data according to Dr. Detwiler.⁷⁸ Since evolution is scientifically unprovable, it is vital that Creationists stop trying to prove the wrongness of the theory; rather, according to Detwiler, Christians would be wisest in striving to understand Biblical revelation and consistently interpret proven scientific data from a Biblical perspective.⁷⁹

Intelligent Design – Creationists are accused by Darwinian adherents of introducing the aspect of God as Intelligent Designer as the First Cause of ordered evolution to shift hard-science evolution into a religious-friendly idea.⁸⁰ Though De-evolution and Theistic Evolution are similar to Intelligent Design creation belief, it is more an extension of those who make literal interpretation of Genesis and declare the earth to be young. Specifically, those fostering intelligent design challenge scientific hypothesis concerning natural selection by denying that such a theory can explain the development of all life. They look to an active Designer that contributed to the complex life that would not have developed naturally in evolutionary processes. Creationists point to empirical evidence of odd developments within the genetic drift of organisms that would not have happened without influence that cannot be found in nature.⁸¹ Overall, those who look to an Intelligent Designer of complex life point to the limitations of scientific explanation concerning the improbabilities of random mutations to increase survival value; in other words, to support Darwinian Evolution requires large jumps in data interpretation, with many holes left glaringly exposed as scientific theory develops.⁸²

De-Evolution – Another type of evolutionary belief is exactly opposite to the traditional belief; this view is beginning to gain some ground among Creationist scientists. It is a matter of de-evolution, rather than evolution that is responsible for the changes that can be measured and observed in species developments. God created perfect life; after the fall into sin, all life in all species began de-evolving. Those hypothesis of traditional evolution (which are just a theory, unable to be proven) are in error according to some Creationist scientists who point to gaps in the fossil records and no evidence of species splitting;⁸³ all scientific data concerning the change of species can just as easily fit into the de-evolving model of created life.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁰ Kent Greenawalt, "Intelligent Design: Scientific Theory or Religious Conviction?," *Journal of Church and State* 45, no. 2 (2003): 237.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, 239.

⁸² *ibid.*, 248.

⁸³ Bailey, "Creationism and Intelligent Design: Scientific and Theological Difficulties," 73.

Some Creationist scientists believe the classification of organisms is flawed, creating order in artificial ways. Species are separated into groups of morphologically similar species but then become dependent upon the scientists personal view of origins to separate them into classifications to prove evolutionary hypothesis. Groupings based solely on phenotypic taxonomy, with similarities and dissimilarities that the organisms presently possess with critical evaluation with fossil evidence is the ideal taxonomy of the Pheneticist (closest to a Creationist way of categorizing life).⁸⁴ However, the opposite camp, the Cladist evolutionary scientists, base their organization upon what an organism must have first looked like, without evidence supporting this important taxonomy.⁸⁵ While the Pheneticist looks at fossil evidence and compares it with modern-day development, a Cladist looks at modern-day organisms and imagines what they must have first looked like originally, without crucial evidence to support their conclusions.⁸⁶ A Cladist evolutionary scientist will not commit to a classification scheme unless it is grounded in his perception of evolution by a phylogenetic reconstruction of what the ancestral species characteristics were first possessed as the evolutionary tree is formed based upon flawed analysis.⁸⁷ A Pheneticist, on the other hand, is ready to move from taxonomy to classification without phylogenetic reconstruction.⁸⁸

The taxonomy of organisms without phylogenetic reconstruction of flawed opinions shows changes to many organisms over the years; but, these changes often reflect de-evolution, a decline in characteristics, since the original species was created. It is concluded by some Creationist scientists that all life was formed in its individual species by God upon His creation and began a downhill decline because of the fallen condition of the world. Any changes that occurred after the fallen condition are mutated or adaptive results of de-evolution that have deteriorated progressively from the first perfect Creation in adaptation to the fallen world; these de-evolving mutations make gene-based sequences progressively deteriorate, making life worse off than the perfect Creation once was.⁸⁹ Life cannot be restored to perfection once again without the touch of God.

Theistic Evolution - Belief that God used evolution as one pattern for His Creation which is reflected several places in Genesis 1 as the earth brings forth the good fruits of its kind, including the first living creatures in Genesis 1:24. Genesis 1:26-27 shows the purposeful creation of man in God's Image to take place after God observes the general evolutionary

⁸⁴ Detwiler, "Life is Diverse - Taxonomy" slides 8, 9, 10.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, "Life is Derived and Dependent" Slides 1-13.

development of living creatures in Genesis 1:24. Theistic Evolutionists believe there is a fixed point in time when the Creation was "very good" and perfect in God's eyes and was finished. Many Christians believe it was this process of evolution, developed by natural laws, but governed by the Creator God, that created the earth we know today. This stance marries faith with modern scientific knowledge removing most conflicts between belief and reason.⁹⁰

This is the subject where a skilled professional Bible Teacher will be able to help their students advance their spiritual growth toward God, by stressing His omnipotence and omniscience. Basically, all Christians should be filled with awe, trembling, and fear when addressing the nature of God. Modern day ideas have removed the idea of an all-powerful God, and seemingly classified him as ruled by man, obedient to their needs, and common.

There is no better way to teach a student to move in awe toward God than to examine His Creation. There are many theories. Genesis 1:1-2 definitely leaves a great deal of the Creation process out. This allows us to explore and wonder and imagine and feel the awesome work of the Lord in His Creation. Examining the issues, choosing the best fit of belief for that time and place, and debating with each other the pros and cons of different theories develops this tendency towards awe and reverence directed toward Him.

Bible Teachers should teach the various theories, then step back and allow the group to discuss and then discuss some more. Assure them that there is no right answers for many of the questions inquiring students form during this process. We just don't know for certain. Scripture has revealed all that will be known for a time here on earth; science, when done correctly and formed upon solid data instead of ethereal theory, can help add to that knowledge.

The best place for a student to arrive in their understanding is with a solid belief in the Creation by the LORD GOD as first cause with the ability to add good science to that process when they are able to carefully navigate those issues with Truth of Scripture reflected always. The final goal for Bible Teachers is to increase passion for the LORD God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit; speaking of their creative works begins that process well!

Cosmogony: The Chaos Theories

There are four different translations of "In the beginning God created" and at least three different views concerning the timing of chaos that seems evident in the account of God's Creation found in Genesis 1:1-2.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Bailey, "Creationism and Intelligent Design: Scientific and Theological Difficulties," 62.

⁹¹ Bruce K. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 2)," *Bibliotheca sacra* 132, no. 526 (1975): 136.

According to Dr. George J. Wenham three translations presuppose the existence of chaotic preexistent matter before God's creative work started with only one, the traditional view that reflects the beginning as the beginning. Accordingly:⁹²

1. V 1 is described as temporal clause subordinate to the main clause in v 2. "In the beginning when God created ..., the earth was without form...." (Ibn Ezra, Gross, NEB, and NAB – This translation has little support, since v 2 is circumstantial, v 1 or v 3 must be a main clause or it would make no sense.)

2. V 1 is a temporal clause subordinate to the main clause in v 3, place v 2 in parenthesis. "In the beginning when God created ... (now the earth was formless) God said..." (Based upon the first Hebrew word to be without a definite article, removing the absolute sense of beginning and opting for "firstly" or "formerly" - Rashi, early rabbinic texts, Schafer, Bauer, Bayer, Herrmann, Humbert, Lane, Loretz, Skinner, Speiser, RSV, NEB, NAB, TEV)

3. V 1 is a main clause, summarizing all the events described in verses 2-31 that can be stated in this matter: "In the beginning God was the creator of heaven and earth" with the full meaning of that statement explained in verses 2-31. (This popular view chiasmatically corresponds to 2:4a as a title of that which is later revealed that presupposes that God first created a chaotic world – Driver, Gunkel, Procksch, Zimmerli, von Rad, Eichrodt, Cassuto, Schmidt, Westermann, Beauchamp, Steck).

4. V 1 is a main clause describing the first act of creation in this traditional view with v 2 and v 3 describing the next phases of God's creation. (Traditional interpretation since third century B.C. to tenth century A.D. – Wellhausen, Konig, Heidel, Kidner, Ridderbos, Young, Childs, Hasel, Gispén, and Notter)⁹³

Restitution Chaos Theory (Gap Theory)⁹⁴ – This theory says chaos occurred after God created a perfect universe. Some claim that Genesis 1:1 is followed by a gap in time where sin entered the universe creating chaos, that is a result of Satan's rebellion described in Isaiah 14:12-17. Genesis 1:2 is attributed by adherents of this theory as a sequential clause of Genesis 1, taking place after this gap in time.⁹⁵ Thus, after God's creation, the earth was

⁹² Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15, Vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 11.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 2)," 137.

⁹⁵ But, there are some supporters to the Gap Theory who disagree with the classification of Genesis 1:2 as a sequential clause. Merrill F. Unger claims verse two as a circumstantial clause in his paper when the grammatical and etymological problems of exegesis of Genesis 1:2 are examined. Merrill F. Unger, "Rethinking the Genesis Account of Creation," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, no. (January-March 1958) (1958): 27-35.

without form and void, creating this chaos that had to be resolved in Genesis 1:3, according to those with this restitution chaos theory.

This gap theory has received wide acceptance through the commentary notes contained in *The Scofield Reference Bible*.⁹⁶ This reference defines the word “create” as referring to the dateless past in all geological ages. It also defines “without form” as the evolving Earth that became something different after the perfect Creation by God. Jeremiah 4:23-26, Isaiah 24:1, and Isaiah 45:18 support this cataclysmic change due to Divine Judgment according to the *Scofield* commentary.⁹⁷ That Jeremiah 4:23 and Isaiah 34:11 are the only two passages other than Genesis 1:2 that place the words “waste and void” together, seem to confirm⁹⁸ that it is connected to an expression of God’s judgment, thus making the same inference to Genesis 1:2. But, when Waltke compares Jeremiah 4:23-26 to Genesis 1:1-2:4a, he notes that God’s judgment upon the land undoes His Creation, which is not part of the procreative state; thus, God’s fury and judgment is “logically fallacious” and leads to a “non sequitur conclusion.”⁹⁹ Further, Waltke analyzes Isaiah 34:11 as a destructive dismantling to its original state that is totally devoid of order and without shape or form which is directly contrary to the procreative unformed state yet formed by God.¹⁰⁰

Initial Chaos Theory – This traditional view of the majority of Jewish and Christian interpreters think chaos occurred simultaneously in a connective result of the original Creation by God.¹⁰¹ First God created the heaven and earth out of nothing, and when it first came from His Hand it was not formed or filled.¹⁰² It required another creative effort to form it. In that unformed place, chaos is said to exist because it is not yet ordered according to this theory.

According to early 1st Century Pharisee Rabban Gamaliel I, Proverbs 8:24 provides the proof text that the water was created before there was an abyss and Isaiah 45:7 to associate the

⁹⁶ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 2)," 138.

⁹⁷ *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*.

⁹⁸ The conjunctions introducing Genesis 1:2, 3, are different. Genesis 2:3 has an apparent *waw* that denotes sequence in Hebrew. But, Genesis 1:2 is missing this sequence conjunction; this makes it highly improbable that Moses was suggesting sequence in the construction of Genesis 1:2 since it is left out according to Waltke (Part 2; p. 140).

⁹⁹ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 2)," 140-142.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 142-143.

¹⁰¹ Bruce K. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 3)," *Bibliotheca sacra* 132, no. 527 (1975): 217.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, 216.

pre-existing material with evil (insisting that God created the original evil).¹⁰³ Thus, Genesis 1:1 is considered an independent clause and Genesis 1:2 is thought to be a circumstantial clause describing the conditions of God's Creation at the moment they first came into existence.¹⁰⁴ This is consistent with Hebrew grammar and Semitic literature that first states the general proposition and then moves to specific particulars.¹⁰⁵

This chaos idea sometimes develops into either chaotic risk that is open-ended interactivity in the midst of Creation that exposes mankind to suffering and evil or some sort of wicked chaos that establishes evil in the presence of Creation.¹⁰⁶ The turbulent and uncertain chaos, the "tehom (תְּהוֹם)" of Genesis, is a deep fold of potential life process to some, while to other a menacing darkness of foreboding trouble.¹⁰⁷ Declaring the darkened calamitous chaos of creation a symbolism to each person's "truth-quest to *what we are* and *who we are becoming*" Professor Keller suggests believers embrace the chaos within themselves as representative of the chaos in the beginning of creation, rather than ignoring, controlling or fleeing chaos by meeting the waves with theological disregard. Keller thinks this chaos is more likely the womb of creation, reflected in Job 38:8-9, than it is a demonized chaos conquered by God and theologically connects life's tumultuous risks with the trust in the Creator to order perfectly.¹⁰⁸

Reformed Evangelical Professor Waltke argues that the heaven and earth combined in verse 1 must be the same as the designated earth in verse 2, preventing the chaos from being a product of perfected creation that uncreated into disorder.¹⁰⁹ Further, he references the lack of a sea (Revelation 21:1) in the perfect cosmos to come and the lack of darkness (Revelation 21:25) in the New Jerusalem to theologically order these concepts removed from paradise, but apparent in Creation. Waltke thinks the exclusion of sea and darkness show that these two are undesired, or they would be included in the Kingdom of God to come.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Maren R. Niehoff, "Creatio Ex Nihilo Theology in Genesis Rabbah in Light of Christian Exegesis," *Harvard Theological Review* 99, no. 1 (2006): 46-47.

¹⁰⁴ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 3)," 216.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 227.

¹⁰⁶ Catherine Keller, "'Be This Fish': A Theology of Creation out of Chaos," *Word & World* 32, no. 1 (2012): 16.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*, 18-19.

¹⁰⁹ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 3)," 220.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, 221.

God is not the creator of disorder, darkness, and the deep, and will not tolerate them in the New Heaven and New Earth according to Waltke.¹¹¹

Pre-creation Chaos Theory – This theory states that chaos existed before the Creation act of God; but, there are two variations based upon different grammatical analyses of the text.¹¹² The interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2 by Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant communities for the New Jewish version (1962), The New American Bible (1970), and The New English Bible (1972) accept Genesis 1:1 as a dependent clause. Thus, that “God created the heavens and the earth” is translated to “when God created the heavens and the earth” or some similar grammatical interpretation similar. “When” in Genesis 1:1 then must be followed by the independent clause in Genesis 1:2 as an “apodosis” that explains Genesis 1 further.

Jewish doctrine supported seven pre-existent things prior to God’s visible Creation (W. Foerster, *TWzNT*, III, 1019 f).¹¹³ These things created before the Genesis 1 Creation act included “the Torah, God’s throne, the fathers (Israel, Moses, and the righteous), the people of Israel, the tabernacle and temple, the name of the Messiah, and repentance. This doctrine required the Torah to be present before Creation or Creation would have been unable to maintain its existence according to Jewish belief.¹¹⁴

The other position pre-creation aspect proposed by Rashi (d. 1105) grammatically interprets Genesis 1:1-3 with the designation of the beginning of Genesis 1:1 a temporal clause (labeled an asyndetic relative clause by modern grammarians).¹¹⁵ This protasis-parenthesis-apodosis position is the one most widely accepted among modern day scholars according to Waltke:¹¹⁶

1:1 Protasis: “When God began to create...”

1:2 Parenthesis: “the earth being/was...”

1:2 Apodosis: “God said...”¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ *ibid.*

¹¹² *ibid.*

¹¹³ Barth, 46.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Gary Anderson, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:1 in the Targums," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1990).

¹¹⁶ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 3)," 222.

¹¹⁷ A. Ben Isaiak, B. Sharfman, and H. M. Orlinsky, *Genesis, the Pentateuch and Rashi's Commentary: A Linear Translation into English*, vol. 1 (1949), 1ff.

Many scholars like Ridderbos,¹¹⁸ Heidel,¹¹⁹ Wellhausen,¹²⁰ Speiser,¹²¹ Orlinsky,¹²² and Gunkel¹²³ have wrestled with the different possibilities depending upon the clause assignment. Waltke's conclusion is that Genesis 1:1 is a general statement, with specific particulars following it in Genesis 1:2 with a Semitic literature pattern common in Hebrew grammar.¹²⁴ His opinion that Genesis 1:1 as an introductory summary statement and 1:2 a situation prior to the Creation and 1:3-31 a narrative of Creation seems supported through his grammatical studies.¹²⁵ But, his evidence is one of many different views; another popular one declares the state portrayed in Genesis 1:2 as darkness, confusion, and lifelessness that is contrary to the nature of God with in whom there is no darkness or disorder.¹²⁶

Simply stated, the argument of grammar focuses upon the words "in" or "when (at)." "In the beginning" teaches that heaven and earth were first creations made out of nothing (creation ex nihilo).¹²⁷ "At the beginning of God's creating heaven and earth" teaches that the earth was in chaos, void, and darkness when God said let there be light.¹²⁸ According to Rashi, Scripture does not intend to teach that the heaven and earth were the first creations of God.¹²⁹

¹¹⁸ Nick H. Ridderbos, *Genesis I 1 Und 2 Oudtestamentische Studien 12* (1958), 217.

¹¹⁹ Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 92.

¹²⁰ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1957), 387.

¹²¹ E. A. Speiser, *Genesis, the Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964), 12.

¹²² Harry M. Orlinsky, "The New Jewish Version of the Torah: Toward a New Philosophy of Bible Translation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 82, (1963): 253.

¹²³ Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, 7th ed. (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 101.

¹²⁴ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 3)," 227.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*

¹²⁶ Bruce K. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 4)," *Bibliotheca sacra* 132, no. 528 (1975): 339-340.

¹²⁷ Anderson, "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:1 in the Targums," 22. Modern day scholarship indicates that "creation ex nihilo" was not a doctrine possessed by the Jews at the time of targumic composition.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, 21.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*

Capturing the Creation (and the possible chaos intermixed) by the Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent LORD God, Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit cannot be satisfactorily explained in two small verses in the beginning; but, the general idea can be applied throughout Scripture as long as the foundation of Creation is attributed to Them.

Waltke eloquently commented on the unexplained origins of pre-creation:

“The principle of origins, so strong in our minds, demands an explanation. But the truth is that the Book mocks us. The Bible provides no information regarding that which is dark and devoid of form. Here are some of the secret things that belong to God.”¹³⁰

Regardless of the obscurity of knowledge pre-creation, one thought must prevail if it is to be reflective of Scripture. The LORD God must be the First Cause in any Creation theory, or it will not support the Truth revealed by the Word of God.

How Old Are God’s Creations?

Let’s start this contemplation with a bold but true statement; even the most intellectual scientists do not have a precise dating of the time of the earth’s creation. All scientific numbers associated with the age of the earth are based upon theories and hypotheses that give a standard measure of time that unites research. But, these theories, though organized for common use, are as inexact as any other time measurement devised by mankind. It is only God’s time that can reveal the true age of anything, and the scant references made throughout Scripture leave a great deal of conflicting opinions. These different opinions form three distinct options; either the scientific measurement, young-earth measurement, or the day-age biologos measurement purport possible measurement of time, all unproven. But, it is fruitful for the faithful to contemplate the time of God referenced in Genesis 1 to seek deeper mysteries revealed throughout His Word concerning the measurement of time as the often contemptuous debates continue without resolve.

Scientific Measure of Standardized Time – Based upon the Big Bang theory usually, it is estimated that the universe known to mankind began when compressed matter exploded about 15-18 billion years ago, with the earth formation occurring about 4 or 5 billion years ago. DNA is theorized by scientists to be traceable to an African single woman about 150,000-200,000 years ago.¹³¹

The estimates of the earth’s age are based upon radiometric dating that is depended upon radioisotope elements and non-radioactive daughter elements that measure rate of decay. In order to establish a unified dating system, assumptions must be made because of the

¹³⁰ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 4)," 338.

¹³¹ Collins, "How Old Is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1-2:3," 109.

vast variations in samples.¹³² Geochronologists, who actually make these measurements, are quite aware of these assumptions and generally make tentative estimations of age that are often declared facts by the evolutionary biologists.

Young-Earth Estimation of Literal Time – A literal translation of the Bible is considered, which makes the earth only a few thousand years old that was created in six 24-hour days.¹³³ It is estimated that a literal interpretation of the Creation recorded in Genesis does not allow for the universe and earth to be over 10,000 years.¹³⁴ Young earth creationists argue that God made geological formations with the appearance of age; scientists scoff at this idea as they present numerous findings of geological evidence of great age in the rocks.¹³⁵

Day-Age Estimation of Biologos Time – Six time periods of great length, identified loosely as “days” in Genesis that show God’s interaction over time with His Creation.¹³⁶

Year-Day Time– Originated by Walter Brute in the 14th century,¹³⁷ this measurement of time was used by many in the early modern era to predict the end of the age, especially during the time periods of the two world wars.¹³⁸ It is the keystone time structure of Seventh-Day Adventists that gives them confidence that the date of the coming of Christ can be computed.¹³⁹ “The bitter disappointment” of the failure of the Lord to return in 1843 and 1844 prophesized by Adventist William Miller (Millerites) and others was calculated using the year-day theory.¹⁴⁰ Anglo-Israelites and other date setters have also made false prophesy

¹³² Detwiler, "Life is Complex - Atoms: Earth's Age".

¹³³ Collins, "How Old Is the Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1-2:3," 109.

¹³⁴ *ibid.*, 110.

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, 110-111.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, 109-110.

¹³⁷ Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Belfast; Greenville, SC: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002), 534.

¹³⁸ Roy L. Aldrich, "Can the End of the Age Be Computed by the Year-Day Theory?," *Bibliotheca sacra* 115, no. 458 (1958): 160.

¹³⁹ *ibid.* LeRoy Edwin Froom’s *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* is a four-volume, exhaustive history of prophecy that traces prophetic interpretations from the early church to the Seventh Day Adventist awakening in the nineteenth century; the emphasis is focused upon the origin of the Adventist movement.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

based upon the year-day theory.¹⁴¹ These failed date-settings in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have discredited the year-day theory in modern day.¹⁴²

Postmillennialists have used this prophetic year-day time-unit in their interpretation of eschatology.¹⁴³ It is based upon the prophetic time measurement that is always a day for a year representation used by God as a forty day/forty year judgment against Israel's broken promise (Numbers 14:33-34), Ezekiel's symbolic act of lying upon his left side for 390 days, and his right 40 days (Ezekiel 4:1-6), and Daniel's prophecy of 2300 days (Daniel 8:14) and Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks (Daniel 9:24-27).¹⁴⁴

Creation ex nihilo/ fiat ex nihilo

There are many "create" metaphorical Hebrew words that express man's creative activities. However, the Hebrew word for created found in Genesis 1:1 בָּרָא expresses the act of creation accomplished exclusively by God.¹⁴⁵ This Hebrew word also uses the accusative to designate that it is a singular act of creation with only one thing made. Because of this association with God and singular intent, many scholars argue that the word suggests that it means "to create out of nothing" (*creation ex nihilo*). The early church thought also that each species of creation was made original (*fiat ex nihilo*) in a literal reading of the text; this idea, though possible in the literal Genesis account is unlikely if modern day scientific data is referenced concerning transitional and evolutionary forms between species.¹⁴⁶

Scofield's popular view that there were only three creative acts of God made out of nothing (heavens and earth v.1, animal life v. 21 and human life vss.26-27)¹⁴⁷ based upon בָּרָא usage is arguable according to Waltke. He declares the usage of בָּרָא is merely another word for "making" which joins many other "making" words that sometimes imply the creation did

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, 165.

¹⁴² *ibid.*, 161.

¹⁴³ Cairns, 534.

¹⁴⁴ Aldrich, "Can the End of the Age Be Computed by the Year-Day Theory?," 163. It should be noted that Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks correctly measures the time from the close of the Babylonian captivity to the crucifixion of Christ and it is believed by many that the prophesy of the last seventy weeks will occur in the future; but, the year-day theory is not needed for this specific interpretation.

¹⁴⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 4)," *ibid.* 132, no. 528 (1975): 335.

¹⁴⁶ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, Second ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 503.

¹⁴⁷ *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*, 3.

not originate out of preexisting material, and is not unique in this implication.¹⁴⁸ Further, אֶרֶץ was not understood to be exclusive in its creation *ex nihilo* meaning by the ancients.¹⁴⁹

Waltke claims the Hebrew words for made (עָשָׂה, firmament, heavenly bodies, sea animals and birds, land animals and man), separated (בָּדַל, light and darkness, waters above firmament below, water and dry land), placed (יָתַן, heavenly bodies and man to rule), and created (בָּרָא, sea creatures, birds, man) show distinctive acts of God's divine command; but, these distinctions do not show separate processes but rather capture the creation of all things by God with vivid verbs to exemplify his marvelous acts.¹⁵⁰

The tendency to group these different acts together as a conglomeration of the creation by God in one magnificent span of purposed activity clearly removes the deeper mysteries and revelations within the Word of God concerning His creation.¹⁵¹ Once individual words are grouped in such a way, typological and symbolical interpretations are prevented. Though Waltke is correct in declaring the LORD God as creator of all things, he errs in assuming that all creation was accomplished in the same ways (from nothing) by disregarding clear evidence of different ways revealed in Genesis 1 through the use of distinctive verbs.

¹⁴⁸ Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 4)," 336.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 336-337.

¹⁵¹ Oddly, Waltke refers to Ronald Youngblood's article "Moses and the King of Siam," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 16 (Fall 1973): 213, that speaks of the first three days God's overcoming of the lack of form, and the next three days God's overcoming the emptiness of space, both based upon the Hebrew word בָּרָא. Waltke calls this an example of God's ordered creation with acts such as spatial separation that add parallelism between the two sets of three-day creations confirming God's full participation in the creation. It seems conflictive to pronounce the same meaning of all parts of God's creation to show creation *ex nihilo*, while at the same time compare different processes that God used to create. Waltke, "Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3 (Part 5)," 29-30.

Other

Significant Books

Bush, L. Russ. *The Advancement: Keeping the Faith in an Evolutionary Age*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003.¹⁵²

Significant Commentaries

Augustine of Hippo wrote:

(Time began with Creation) “For if eternity and time are rightly distinguished by this, that time does not exist without some movement and transition, while in eternity there is no change, who does not see that there could have been no time had not some creature been made, which by some motion could give birth to change,—the various parts of which motion and change, as they cannot be simultaneous, succeed one another,—and thus, in these shorter or longer intervals of duration, time would begin? Since then, God, in whose eternity is no change at all, is the Creator and Ordainer of time, I do not see how He can be said to have created the world after spaces of time had elapsed, unless it be said that prior to the world there was some creature by whose movement time could pass. And if the sacred and infallible Scriptures say that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, in order that it may be understood that He had made nothing previously,—for if He had made anything before the rest, this thing would rather be said to have been made “in the beginning,”—then assuredly the world was made, not in time, but simultaneously with time.”¹⁵³

Martin Luther wrote:

(First Creation like a seed) “The plain and simple meaning of what Moses (here) says is that all things that exist were created by God and that at the beginning of the first day, God put into it the light so that the light of day was shining and the shapeless heaven and earth could be seen. This was

¹⁵² L. Russ Bush, *The Advancement: Keeping the Faith in an Evolutionary Age* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003).

¹⁵³ Augustine of Hippo, “*The City of God*,” in *a Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series: St. Augustin's City of God and Christian Doctrine*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 2 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 208.

not unlike a shapeless crude seed from which things can be generated and produced.”¹⁵⁴

John Calvin wrote:

(Embraces the authority of Scriptures through testimony of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s heart) “¹⁵⁵IN vain were the authority of Scripture fortified by argument, or supported by the consent of the Church, or confirmed by any other helps, if unaccompanied by an assurance higher and stronger than human judgment can give. Till this better foundation has been laid, the authority of Scripture remains in suspense. On the other hand, when recognising its exemption from the common rule, we receive it reverently, and according to its dignity, those proofs which were not so strong as to produce and rivet a full conviction in our minds, become most appropriate helps.”

(Obediently hear the Word of God in Scripture, or be stupid and vain) Therefore, while it becomes man seriously to employ his eyes in considering the works of God, since a place has been assigned him in this most glorious theatre that he may be a spectator of them, his special duty is to give ear to the Word, that he may the better profit. Hence it is not strange that those who are born in darkness become more and more hardened in their stupidity; because the vast majority instead of confining themselves within due bounds by listening with docility to the Word, exult in their own vanity. If true religion is to beam upon us, our principle must be, that it is necessary to begin with heavenly teaching, and that it is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture.”¹⁵⁶

(Reverence is due Scripture as the Truth of God) A most pernicious error has very generally prevailed, viz., that Scripture is of importance only in so far as conceded to it by the suffrage of the Church; as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God could depend on the will of men. With great insult to the Holy Spirit, it is asked, who can assure us that the Scriptures proceeded from God; who guarantee that they have come down safe and unimpaired to our times; who persuade us that this book is to be received

¹⁵⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Commentary on Genesis*, trans., J. T. Mueller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 9.

¹⁵⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997), *Institutes* 1, viii, 1.

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, *Institutes* 1, vi, 2.

with reverence, and that one expunged from the list, did not the Church regulate all these things with certainty? On the determination of the Church, therefore, it is said, depend both the reverence which is due to Scripture, and the books which are to be admitted into the canon.¹⁵⁷

(Worldly men claim Scripture to be opinion; the Holy Spirit confirms it as the Word of God with clear proof) Profane men think that religion rests only on opinion, and, therefore, that they may not believe foolishly, or on slight grounds, desire and insist to have it proved by reason that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired. But I answer, that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who spoke by the mouth of the prophets, must penetrate our hearts, in order to convince us that they faithfully delivered the message with which they were divinely entrusted. This connection is most aptly expressed by Isaiah in these words, "My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," (Isa. 59:21). Some worthy persons feel disconcerted, because, while the wicked murmur with impunity at the Word of God, they have not a clear proof at hand to silence them, forgetting that the Spirit is called an earnest and seal to confirm the faith of the godly, for this very reason, that, until he enlightens their minds, they are tossed to and fro in a sea of doubts.¹⁵⁸

Karl Barth wrote:

(Repudiates natural theologies based upon science as the denial of God's revelation in Jesus Christ) "But the fact that the Bible gives us a reliable basis for our knowledge and confession, and it tells the truth on which we can rely, on which the Church can base its proclamation, and on which each individual Christian can confidently build his own conclusions, is itself true in and by reason of the fact that the Bible gives us God's own witness to Himself, that it gives us the witness to Jesus Christ. Its word in all words is this Word. And it is this Word, its witness to Jesus Christ, which makes all its words the infallible Word of God. As the organ of the Spirit it helps us to this knowledge of the Father through the Son. In what it says about creation it also helps us to the knowledge of the Creator through the One in whom the Creator has reconciled the creature to

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., Institutes I, vii, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., Institutes I, vii, 4.

Himself, in whom He has ordered the relationship of the creature to Himself, in whom He has given to the creature His eternal future, in accordance with the fact that in Him He loved, and willed it from all eternity. The whole Bible speaks figuratively and prophetically of Him, of Jesus Christ, when it speaks of creation, the Creator and the creature. If, therefore, we are rightly to understand and estimate what it says about creation, we must first see that – like everything else it says – this refers and testifies first and last to Him. At this point, too, He is the primary and ultimate object of its witness. We cannot afford to ignore this object. To the extent that we do, we expose ourselves to the danger of seeing nothing at all. What is said in prospect of Him can be understood only in retrospect of Him. That is, the whole circumference of the content of Scripture, including the truth and reality of the creation of the world by God, can be understood only from this centre.”¹⁵⁹

(It is faith, not science that reveals creation by God) “Jesus Christ is the Word by which the knowledge of creation is mediated to us because He is the Word by which God has fulfilled creation and continually maintains and rules it. ...Jesus Christ is the key to the secret of creation. It is thus clear that the knowledge of creation, of the Creator and of the creature, is a knowledge of faith, and that here too the Christian doctrine is a doctrine of faith.”¹⁶⁰

(From Augustine forward, creation is God’s Grace) “It was not really arbitrary, therefore, but right and necessary from the Christian standpoint that those fathers from Augustine onwards wanted creation to be understood as the grace of God”¹⁶¹

(God’s Grace in Creation explained) “When the Christian doctrine of creation speaks of God as the sum total of the first cause and the final contingency of all things, it does so in recognition of the God who is the Father of the Son and who, together with the Son, is the source of the Holy Spirit, and who, as such, is the divinely free and loving person – the Almighty. It tells us that God’s first work, the positing of the distinct reality of man and his world, is indelibly marked off from every other source or beginning by the fact that it precedes and prepares for the second work, God’s gracious dealing within the sphere of this reality.”¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Barth, 23-24. According to Barth, the Bible must be studied through Christ’s revelation of God through His Word, and not through natural science.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 28.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*, 39.

(Jesus Christ as Creator) The apostles “were the bearers of the objective, shattering message of the kingdom of God drawn near, and the consequent end of all mediating philosophy, theosophy and cosmology” (ideas formed before Christ was revealed). As they described “Jesus Christ as the One “through whom” or “in whom” God had created all things, they were extending to every doctrine of God and view of the world an invitation to faith, i.e., to practical participation in God’s covenant of grace and its history.”¹⁶³

(The Aim of Creation is History) “This follows decisively from the fact that God the Creator is the triune God who acts and who reveals Himself in history. God wills and God creates the creature for the sake of His Son or Word and therefore in harmony with Himself; and for His own supreme glory and therefore in the Holy Spirit. He wills and creates it for the sake of that which in His grace He wills to do to it and with it by His Son or Word in the Holy Spirit. The execution of this activity is history. What is meant is the history of the covenant of grace instituted by God between Himself and man; the sequence of the events in which God concludes and executes this covenant with man, carrying it to its goal, and thus validating in the sphere of the creature that which from all eternity He has determined in Himself; the sequence of the events for the sake of which God has patience with the creature and with its creation gives it time – time which acquires content through these events and which is finally to be ‘fulfilled’ and made ripe for its end by their conclusion. This history is from the theological standpoint *the* history.”¹⁶⁴

(Creation Takes Place as History in Time) “Since the covenant of grace, and therefore history, is the aim of creation, creation itself belongs to history and therefore to the sequence of events which fulfills time. It occupies a highly unique position and significance as the first of all God’s works, and by reason of this it is clearly distinct from the rest. But it belongs to all the rest, for it is itself a sequence of events fulfilling time, historical actuality, in just the same way as the consummation and redemption as the conclusion of God’s works will be an event fulfilling time, historical what follows it. ...Creation is not a timeless truth, even though time begins with it, and it extends to all times, and God is the Creator at every point in time.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, 53.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 59.

(Scripture or Science?) “By beginning with the history of creation the Bible sets the ground and being of man and his world in the light of the grace which later reveals itself as God’s meaning and purpose in that which is the fulfillment of time takes place between God and man. This means that the question about the origin, existence and nature of things cannot be withdrawn from the sphere of grace; that we cannot call for any independent answers foreign to this sphere or develop an independent system of thought in opposition to the revelation of God or His rule in the reconciliation of the world to Himself, as if there were a corresponding natural system of reality where the grace of God does not yet have, or no longer has, the final word....By beginning with the story of creation the Bible protects the faith in God to which it invites and summons from being regarded as a special function related to a special sphere of reality. On the contrary, it relates everything to faith, showing that even faith’s presupposition, i.e., the existence of the creature, is the object of faith and therefore belongs to faith and cannot be recognized except by faith. It also shows on the other hand that faith is related to the whole of reality, and thus prevents the feeling of isolation and threat which is unavoidable when creation forms a distinct sphere from that of revelation, nature from that of grace and existence from that of faith. These are the inner reasons why we have cause to be grateful that the biblical witness begins neither with silence about creation nor with a philosophy of creation but with the history of creation.”¹⁶⁶

Wolfhart Pannenberg wrote:

(The Triune God is Separate from the Special Divine Action of Creation)
“At issue primarily is the divine act of creation as the free origin of a reality distinct from God. ...The origin of the world as creation by God’s free action tells us that even if the world had not come into existence, nothing would have been lacking in the deity of God. ...For in his freedom God has from all eternity decided to be the Creator and Consummator of a world of creatures. Hence the thought that God might not have made the world rests on an abstraction from God’s actual self-determination, which must be grounded in the eternity of his essence and cannot be conceived of as external to God’s concrete reality. All the same, from the standpoint of God the origin of the world must still be viewed as contingent, for it derives from the freedom of God in his Trinitarian life.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 60.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 62-63.

¹⁶⁷ Pannenberg, 9.

(No Need for Prior Chaos) “The Genesis story gave classical expression for ages to come to this unrestricted nature of God’s power in creation. It did so by focusing on the divine Word of command as the only basis of the existence of creatures. Whether this version crowded out an earlier version, or whether command and record went together from the very first, it is clear in any case that creation on this view did not need to include a battle with chaos as it did in the Babylonian epic or a struggle with the sea like that of the Ugaritic-Canaanite Baal, of which we still find echoes in the Psalms. The effortless nature of the simple command illustrates the unrestricted nature of the power at the disposal of the Creator.”¹⁶⁸

(Reason for Creation) “God had only one reason to create a world, the reason that is proclaimed in the fact of creation itself, namely, that God graciously confers existence on creatures, an existence alongside his own divine being and in distinction from him. Part of this creating is the continuity of creaturely existence. Only as it continues to be does creaturely existence acquire the independence of its own being distinct from God’s. We see here the intention of the Creator, which is inseparably connected with the act of creation and which has the existence of creatures as its goal.”¹⁶⁹

(The Son of God was not the Only Creator) “The Son is not alone the Creator of the world. He moves out of the deity in execution of the mission that he is given by the Father. Hence the Christian church confesses the Father as the Creator of the world, not the Son, for the only content of the work of the Son is to serve the Father and to bring in his kingdom. The Father thus acts as Creator through the Son. Nevertheless, the Son’s moving out of the deity to become the Logos of a world of creatures must be regarded no less as an expression of his own free decision. This is obvious if we are to expound the concept of the divine Logos in terms of the relationship of Jesus as Son to his heavenly Father.”¹⁷⁰

(The Son of God’s Freedom to Create) “The Father sends the Son but thereby lays on him no compulsion to follow a command of fatherly love as though by outer constraint. In a free act of fulfilling his sonship, the

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 12-13.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 20.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 29-30.

Son himself moves out of the divine unity by letting the Father alone be the one God. That even in this act of freedom he is one with the will of the Father can be understood only in the light of a third thing, namely, that we have here an expression of the fellowship of the Spirit that unites the two. Thus creation is a free act of God as an expression of the freedom of the Son in his self-distinction from the Father, and of the freedom of the fatherly goodness that in the Son accepts the possibility and the existence of a creation distinct from himself, and of the freedom of the Spirit who links the two in free agreement.”

(Time Begins at the Creation Act which Originates with the Eternality of God) “But the creation of the world is not one of God’s historical acts among others, for it is not an act in time and history, if only at their beginning. It is the act that constitutes time itself along with all creaturely reality. It establishes not merely the temporal beginning of creaturely existence but even this existence itself in all its range. The fact that God is the origin of this existence finds expression in the tracing back of its beginning to God, which presupposes already the perspective of a time in which creatures have their existence.”¹⁷¹

(Scripture or Science?) “Theology must make this claim in dialogue with the sciences. It may prove to be vulnerable in this regard, and often enough it may fail to do justice to its task. But this is far better than neglecting that task. A failure to claim that the world that the sciences describe is God’s world is a conceptual failure to confess the deity of the God of the Bible. To focus the belief in creation on subjectivity, as an expression of the feeling of dependence, is no substitute. If we follow such a course, the self-understanding of faith comes into conflict with our awareness of the world and easily becomes insincere, and confession of God as Creator becomes an empty formula. In view of the emancipation of 18th-century science from belief in God as the world’s Creator and Sustainer, all this has become part of the fate of the Christian faith in the modern world. But theology cannot make a virtue of the resultant necessity by simply asserting itself against the scientific view of the world. It cannot ignore what the sciences have to say about the world.”¹⁷²

(Connection between Physics and Scripture) “The principal differences between the ways of describing reality in physics and in theology prohibit us from offering a direct theological interpretation of the field theories of

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*, 42.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, 59-60.

physics. In accordance with the nature of scientific perception, these theories can be seen only as approximations to the reality that is also the subject of theological statements about creation. We see that the reality is the same because theological statements about the working of the Spirit of God in creation historically go back to the same philosophical root that by mathematical formalizing is also the source of the field theories of physics, and the different theories give evidence of the same emphases that we find in the underlying metaphysical intuitions. We also see that the reality is the same because the theological (as distinct from the scientific) development of the concept is in a position to find a place in its reflection for the different form of description in physics, for which there can be empirical demonstration, and in this way to confirm the coherence of its own statements about the reality of the world.”¹⁷³

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

(The Fallacy of God-of-the-Gaps in letter written May 25, 1944) “Weizacker’s book of *Das Weltbild der Physik* is still keeping me very busy. It has again brought home to me quite clearly how wrong it is to use God as a stopgap for the incompleteness of our knowledge. ...God is no stopgap; he must be recognized at the center of our life, not when we are at the end of our resources.”¹⁷⁴

Significant Journal Articles

Bruce K. Waltke delivered a series of five articles entitled *Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3* (See Bibliography for full citations) at the Bueermann-Champion Foundation Lectures at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon on October 1j-4, 1974. This series was published in the important scholastic theological journal created in Dallas Theological Seminary’s *Bibliotheca sacra* in volume 132, no. 526, 527, 528, and 529. They were adapted from Waltke’s *Creation and Chaos: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Biblical Cosmogony*.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 83.

¹⁷⁴ Mary Bosanquet, *The Life and Death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (NY: Harper and Row, 1968), 164.

¹⁷⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Biblical Cosmogony* (Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974).

Attachment #1

Authority, Inspiration and Inerrancy of Bible Belief Declared

By Kathy L. McFarland

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is Gods revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

I DECLARE that the Bible, in its entirety and as originally composed, is the Word of God written.

I declare that in every detail, both the form and content of the Bible are inspired by God and essential to the message of the Bible.

I declare that the assertions of the Bible are absolutely true regardless of the distances of time and culture.

I declare that any copy of the Bible is profitable and remains the inerrant, infallible Word of God, to the extent that its translation communicates clearly and accurately the meaning intended by the words of the authors of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts at the time they were written.

I declare that the Bible is the only authoritative source for Christian faith and practice, and it is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions of any kind should be tried.

I declare that there is no realm of life, belief, or investigation over which the Bible does not have supreme authority.

I declare that the authority of the Bible derives solely from the fact that it has God as its author, and not from recognition by any church, individual judgment, experience, practicality or conformity to other beliefs or knowledge.

I declare that the Bible consists by definition of all written material which is inspired by God.

I declare that books of the Bible received entry as they were recognized by Christian consensus to be inspired, and that the composition was not of the churches making.

I declare that the inspired Bible is the 39 commonly received books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, each as they were originally composed.

I declare that the order of books is of little or no help in biblical interpretation.

I declare that the words contained within the Bible are all equally inspired and true, and are on the same level of inspiration and truthfulness as the words spoken by Jesus Himself.

I declare that biblical revelation is progressive: while the quality of revelation never changed, the quantity increased, so that the fullest revelation comes with the completion of the later parts of the New Testament.

I declare that the Bible is completely inerrant, meaning that everything it asserts explicitly or implicitly, on any subject, is true in the sense intended by the LORD God.

I declare that the believer's confidence in the Spirit's authorship of the Bible should derive from the internal conviction of the Holy Spirit Himself, rather than from human authority, tradition, intuition, personal appeal, or evidence.

I declare that the doctrine of the complete inerrancy of the Bible as originally written is absolutely essential to any theology which would call itself Christian, and that anything short of this is heresy and unbelief, and tends toward the destruction of faith.

I declare that perceived inconsistencies or inaccuracies in the words or meanings of the Bible are the reader's misperceptions.

I declare that it is a worthwhile task to discover the resolutions of such apparent errors, but that some may be beyond present human discovery, and that in any case it is unnecessary to resolve these conflicts to be confident of the complete truthfulness of the Bible.

I declare that the Bible infallibly accomplishes all the purposes for which it was intended.

About the Author: Kathy L. McFarland is a Becker Bible Studies Teacher and Author of *Guided Bible Studies for Hungry Christians*. She has received her Bachelor of Science degree in Religious Studies from Liberty University, and is currently seeking her Master of Divinity (Professional Ministries Track) degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary & Graduate School and her Master of Classics and Christianity with Knox Theological Seminary. Kathy's favorite studies include the connections between Old Testament exegesis, Christian Apologetics, and Bible typology and mysteries.

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