

Genesis 1-2 (Creation):

In this section we will look at the text of the first two chapters of Genesis in context, and I will provide some helpful exegetical notes along the way. One thing to remember is the fact that this account was not originally written in English. While the translation is pretty good, it cannot 100% truly convey the intended meaning all the time. The best we can do is interpret the text as we translate. Most people agree it was written by Moses in an ancient Hebrew language about the year 1445 BC. The intended audience is a large group of about two million Israelites who have just wandered the desert of Sinai for the past 40 years and are about to enter the land God promised them. As best you can, forget what you know or think you know about the earth and the universe as a whole and picture yourself in the crowd listening to Moses deliver this account...

Genesis 1-2 (ESV)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

8 And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so.

12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,

15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.

16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.”

21 So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.

25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,

6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—

7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.
11 The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.
12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.
13 The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush.
14 And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.
15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.
16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,
17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”
19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.
20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.
21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.
22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.
23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”
24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

1

The first thing to consider is the boundary of the account. The beginning is easy (Genesis 1:1). The end is sometimes debated. There are indeed two Creation accounts here. Some have said they contradict, some say they agree nicely. I have included both of them together here. For the section or pericope boundaries, I will follow the guidelines of C. John Collins in his outstanding book, “Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary and Theological Commentary.” Collins breaks the first Creation account at Genesis 2:3. Some people include Genesis 2:4 as a summary of the first chapter, but the introduction of the Divine Name *Yahweh* and the chiasmic nature of verse 2:4 indicate it is an opening to the next passage. With that, we will look more into the first Creation account in Genesis 1:1-2:3.

¹ *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version*. Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

With God as the sole character and the use of verbs in the *wayyiqtol*, Collins calls this an exalted prose narrative. In essence, *wayyiqtol* verbs, sometimes called *waw* consecutives or *waw* conversives, tell sequential actions in the past tense. Normally the *wayyiqtol* verbs will be preceded by a verb in the perfect tense that sets up the narrative to follow (Pratico and Van Pelt, “Basics of Biblical Hebrew”, p. 195). Before looking at the meanings of the words and getting into the areas of heated debates, let’s look at the verb tenses to see if we see this pattern here.

Genesis 1:1-5 (ESV)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

The Beginning:

Many people interpret these first five verses as the first Creation Day. They interpret this first Day as seeing the creation of earth, space, time and light all in a 24 hour timeframe. This interpretation is inarguably the simplest one a 21st century English-speaking reader can make based on the text above. It is my opinion that the simplest explanation is usually the best one, but let’s explore the passage using the guidelines mentioned above.

In the Hebrew text, the first *wayyiqtol* verb we see is in verse 3 (*wayyomer* - and [God] said). In the first two verses we find verbs in the perfect tense (created, and was), as well as the participle was hovering. If you remember, in a typical Hebrew narrative, perfect tense verbs at the beginning of a series of sequential events are used to describe the conditions at the time the first event occurred. Stated more simply, at some time prior to God saying “Let there be light”, the events in verses 1-2 took place. Looked at linguistically, the first Creation Day may in fact start in verse 3.

There is another piece of evidence that backs this up. If we look further into the passage we find that each of the other Creation Days begin with the same *wayyiqtol* verb *wayyomer* (and [God] said) (cf. vv. 6, 9, 14, 20 and 24). If we wish to keep the literary framework of the account intact, we should consider the first Creation Day as beginning in verse 3. I believe that a Hebrew living in the 15th century BC would have most likely understood the passage in this way.

What does that mean for our interpretation? It means that whether or not the Days in Genesis 1 are 24 hours or longer, the creation of the heavens and the earth and darkness and the deep occurred before Creation Day 1. This is not a new interpretation. It has been around a while. In fact, people have tried to fit the geologic ages into a “gap” between Genesis 1:1 and 2 or verses 2 and 3. This “gap theory” also involves the earth turning into a planet without form and void due to the fall of Satan and subsequent battle with good angels. This is a weak attempt at a harmonization of Scripture and geology as there is no reason to translate the verb *hayah* as “became” over was (as in most English versions) in verse 2. Also there is no geologic evidence

indicating the abrupt end of all life, the earth existing as a wasteland and the reappearing of new life.

If verses 1 and 2 take place before the Creation Week, when do the events occur? The Bible simply says in the beginning. And it clearly says that when God said “Let there be light”, the earth already existed and was in darkness. This is critical to interpreting the passage of Genesis 1:1-5. Let’s dig in a little deeper.

There is no reason to interpret Genesis 1:1 as anything less than the creation of time, space and matter. Some have said it is merely a title to the story, but the grammar with its perfect tense verbs leading up to the Creation Days is clearly pointing to verse 1 having historical content. The prepositional phrase *bereshiyth* (in the beginning) occurs 5 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. The other 4 passages are in the Book of Jeremiah and are attached to the larger phrase “In the beginning of the reign of King...”. In Jeremiah 26:1; 27:1; and 49:34, the exact time of the beginning is ambiguous. However in Jeremiah 28:1 it appears that the beginning is not the beginning we might imagine but at a certain four years and five months into the reign of King Zedekiah who we know reigned for 11 years (2Kings 24:18).

The LXX translates *bereshiyth* as *en arche* which is used 28 times and is a little more liberal in meaning (i.e. first, beginning, chief). John uses this phrase exactly in John 1:1 in a direct reference to this same beginning. He states that the Word (later made known as Jesus) existed with God and as God in the beginning. This makes sense when he refers to Jesus as the creator of all things (John 1:3 and backed up by Paul in Colossians 1:15-17).

The actual root of the word, *res*, is used 51 times and translated as first, beginning, head, chief, choicest, etc... We will see later in Gen. 2:10 the same word is translated “rivers” and actually refers to the headwaters of the river, or the river’s beginning upslope. The other passage in the OT that uses *res* in a direct reference to the beginning is Prov. 8:22. Here, God is said to have possessed wisdom at the beginning of His works. New Testament passages that use *arche* in reference to the beginning are Matt. 19:4, 8; 24:21; Mark 10:6; 13:19; John 1:1-2; 8:44; Heb. 1:10; 2Pet. 3:4; 1John 2:13-14; 3:8; Rev. 3:14; 21:6; 22:13.

Based on the semantic ranges above, an original recipient of this text would have understood that the beginning took place at some time before the first Creation Day. He would most likely also have understood an origination point for the heavens and the earth and that the beginning of the earth would not necessarily have been at the same time as the beginning of the heavens. We know this from the use of “beginning” in referring to the 5th month of the 4th year of King Zedekiah’s reign and NOT referring to the 1st day of the 1st month of the 1st year of his reign. Also, Jesus refers to the creation of man and woman at the “beginning” of creation in Mark 10:6. We know from Genesis 1 that they were created on Creation Day 6 not Day 1. So in summary, the beginning in Genesis 1:1 appears to have lasted from the origination point until God says “Let there be light” in verse 3. We must be honest in saying that the text gives us no clues as to how long this took.

The grammar of Genesis 1:1 in context establishes there was a beginning of time. At some point “in” the beginning the heavens and the earth were created. And it establishes that they were

created by God. The Hebrew word *elohim* is a plural of majesty. Not that there are more than one God, but that He is plural out of respect. It is used 1068 times in the Old Testament. Sometimes it is shortened to *el* and sometimes (41x) appears as *eloah* mostly in the poetic books. In all cases, the intended character is the same God that appears all throughout Scripture.

Elohim is said to have created (Heb. *bara*). This verb is used 45 times in the Old Testament. In 43 of those occurrences it appears in the Qal stem and is always used as an activity of God. Some have suggested that the terms *bara* (create), *asa* (make), and *yatsar* (fashion) are interchangeable and thus have no theological or deeper exegetical significance. I believe the fact that every one of the 43 occurrences in the Qal speak of God's special creative activity clearly suggests the opposite. This word has extreme theological and exegetical significance. According to TWOT *bara* denotes the concept of "initiating something new". It is used four times in Genesis 1-2 in referring to the heavens and the earth (1:1), the *nephesh chayah* or living creatures in the air and sea (1:21), man and woman in God's own image (1:27) and in the closing summary of 2:3.

In contrast, the term *asa* is generally translated as "to do" or "to make" and is used over 2500 times. In the Creation accounts TWOT suggests that *asa* is used where there is no concern in conveying the message that God brought about something new but simply that God fashioned an object from material already in existence. Thus there becomes even greater exegetical significance in the writer's word choice of *bara* in 1:1. The fact that LXX translates both words as *poieo* is irrelevant as the Greek word for God's special act of creating (*ktisis*) did not attain that meaning until New Testament times.

Therefore, we have God creating or bringing something new into existence, namely the heavens and the earth. In the Hebrew we read *eth hashamayim weth haarets*. The word for heavens (*shamayim*) is always in dual form suggesting plurality (only the KJV translates it as the singular "heaven"). It is used 417 times in the OT. The word also has a more local meaning of "sky" (as in the NCV) and thus has been part of the debate of extents, local vs. global. Again we need to be honest and say that our Israelite listener would have had no comprehension of a spherical earth that is 24,901 miles in circumference. Likewise he would have no ability or reason to comprehend a universe that is over 93 billion light years across. There is a bit of contextual evidence that can help us out. Later in verse 6, God makes the expanse (Heb. *raqiya*) and calls it *shamayim* (heaven). Again in verse 20, He creates the winged birds to fly in *raqiya hashamayim* (the expanse of heaven). From these additional verses we may reasonably conclude that the heavens of verse 1 are global in extent (i.e. the entire universe) and the heavens in the rest of the account are local and refer to the sky. One may object and say that the sun and moon are placed in the expanse in verse 14 which we know is above the sky. But that then becomes a perspective issue where the writer is not trying to convey a scientific fact as we know it today but simply calling it as he sees it. Our Israelite listener would tell us plainly that the sun and moon have been placed in the sky. He would have no real idea that they are in space 93 million and 238 thousand miles away respectively. We will deal more with the perspective issue in verse 2.

If the heavens in verse 1 have been debated, the earth has been even more so. This becomes more of an issue when discussing the Flood in chapters 6-8, but it is also an issue in Genesis 1. The "earth" (Heb. *erets*) can also have both a global and local meaning just as we encountered

with “heavens”. Does it refer to the globe, or just a piece of land around the observer? Moses seems to be making the same point he did with “heavens” because there is a direct parallel with “earth”. In verse 10, God calls the dry land (Heb. *yabbasa*) earth (Heb. *erets*). Again in verse 24, God makes living creatures such as cattle and creeping things from the *erets*. We know that cattle aren’t thriving on every part of the globe; only on land. Therefore, just as He started with a global picture of the “heavens” and narrowed it down to a more local extent in the “sky” later on, He now does for the “earth”. Genesis 1:1 portrays a global earth and from verse 10 throughout the account, He uses it in a more local “land” sense. This concept of global vs. local extents in these multiple-meaning words is the topic of continued and often heated debate. The context often tells us the correct use if we carefully search. The parallels of God systematically redefining and reducing the extents of the “heavens” and the “earth” is evidence that we are here dealing with the creation of the global earth inside the physical universe we observe today in this first verse in the Bible. This is also the understanding of writers in the NT (Heb. 11:3).

By the time we get to verse 2 we find the global earth already in existence albeit in a different state than we see it today. I believe this verse still has the temporal setting of “the beginning” because of the flow of the first two verses, and we have not yet seen any *wayyiqtol* verbs which would depict a progression of the storyline. Only the KJV translates the conjunction and (the Hebrew letter *waw*) to start verse 2 (the NASB dropped it, NIV and HCSB translate “now”). I feel the omission of the conjunction takes away from the transition between the first two verses. The first verse speaks of the creation of the earth and verse 2 tells us the conditions present at that time. At some point early in its history the earth was *tohu wavohu* (without form and void). These words are difficult to understand. They occur elsewhere together only in Is. 34:11 and Jer. 4:23 and speak of God’s judgement. This has caused some to say the same of their usage in Gen. 1:2 and lend support to the gap theory, but that is unnecessary. As Isaiah says, God did not create the earth to be *tohu* but formed it to be inhabited (Is. 45:18). Though the earth may have been an empty wasteland in the beginning, God did not intend for it to stay that way.

At this same time on the void, empty earth, darkness was over the face of the deep. Apparently the primordial earth contained a deep which the Hebrew audience would have understood to be the oceans and seas or any other large body of water. Genesis 1:9 gives the allusion that the deep was global in extent and this is further evidenced in the Creation Psalm (Ps. 104:6-9).

We have already determined that the only character we see in Genesis 1 is *elohim* (God). In verse 2b we see a shift in the vantage point of the observer (God). And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. God himself is pictured as hovering over the waters of earth, and I believe this shifts the focus of the observer from a heavenly vantage point in creation to a more personal, earthly vantage point. This also suits the Hebrew listener better as he can relate only to this vantage point. In Hebrew *ruach* (spirit, breath, wind) occurs 378 times. Like the Greek *pneuma*, *ruach* can also mean “wind”, but the construct *waruach elohim* should leave no doubt that the object is the Spirit of God and not “a wind from God” as in the NRSV. It is the breath of God that is doing the creating (Job 26:13); the very Word of God who was in the beginning (John 1:1).

The Spirit of God is here performing an action. He was hovering over the face of the waters. It is unclear exactly the meaning of was hovering (Heb. *merachepheth*), but we know it is in

participial form in the Piel stem. Therefore a proper translation should carry the “ing” ending and not simply “moved” as the KJV translates. Moses also uses this word in Deut. 32:11 to picture God hovering over his people as an eagle “hovers” over her young. BDB has an interesting comment suggesting the word could mean brooding (or fertilizing) from the Syriac cognate *racheph*. This could be God’s first act of creating life on earth by “fertilizing” the waters of the deep with single-celled cyanobacteria and green algae which would help shape the earth and its atmosphere into a habitable place through photosynthesis. This was God’s purpose after all (Is. 45:18). This interpretation also nicely paves the way to verse 3 where the earthly observer first sees light. In any regard, the verse clearly depicts the Creator’s intimate and active role in his creation.

Creation Day 1:

Verse 3 begins with the first *wayyiqtol* verb encountered in the account; *wayyomer* (and [God] said). Since this is the first *wayyiqtol* verb which usually kicks off the storyline, I prefer the translation “and” over “then” as is in NKJV, NASB, HCSB, NCV and NLT. Once the story gets underway it may be preferable to use “then”. Most translations are inconsistent in this regard sometimes leaving it untranslated altogether. The very first unarguable action of the Creation Week is when God uttered the words *yehiy or* (“Let there be light”). Not unexpectedly, these words have been the center of another debate on extents. Did God create light in this verse (a view held by those believing a global extent and 24-hour Creation Day; Young Earth Creationists), or was light already in existence and God simply summoned it into view for our earthly observer (a view held by those believing in a local extent; Old Earth Creationists)? Remember according to the text God Himself is seen as positioned on earth when verse 3 begins (see His actions in verse 2b).

As is often the case, I believe there are contextual clues that are significant and should be noted when forming an interpretation. We need to look at the nature of the command (“let be”), the nature of the light and how it is used elsewhere in the account and throughout Scripture. First we will look at the command itself. The verb “to be” (Heb. *hayah*) is used 3,555 times in the OT. This first occurrence is in the jussive conjugation. This can be thought of as the imperative for the 3rd person. There is no real English equivalent although the idea is simple enough and it can easily be translated with the helper word “let”. The verb *hayah* is used 216 times in the jussive. Only a few of those are either direct statements from or towards God, but it is important to realize that in some cases it is rather nonsensical to view the command as the bringing forth of something that did not exist previously. Take 1Chr. 6:40 for example, “Now, O my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open...”. Are we to interpret this as God’s eyes were previously closed until this statement (cf. Neh. 1:6; Ps. 130:2)? Ezra 1:3 says “there is among you of all His people, may his God be with him!” Was God never with them until this point? Ps. 33:22 says “Your lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us...”. Had God not shown them love previously? Also see Ps. 80:18; 104:31; 119:173. In not one of these cases does the text refer to the first occurrence of what is commanded. It does seem from the text in Genesis 1 that this certainly could be taken as the creation of light, but there is ample evidence to suggest this need not be the case. In fact the bulk of evidence from other passages suggests the opposite. Look at the LXX which translates light as *phos*. *Phos* is used in the NT 73 times. The most remarkable uses are in John 1:4-5; 8:12; 1John 1:5 and Rev. 21:23. These verses explicitly say that God is light (*phos*). Light is an attribute of God. Therefore it cannot be created. In fact, Isaiah is very careful to say that light

(*or*) is formed (Heb. *yatsar*) and the darkness is created (*bara*) in Is. 45:7. Again in reference to Genesis 1:3, Paul says in 2Cor. 4:6 “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” The command here is that the light shine (Gr. *lampo*) out of the darkness. There is no command to be or to be created. To summarize, the bulk of Scriptural evidence seems to indicate that the light was not created in Gen. 1:3. Darkness was created (Is. 45:7) and covered the earth in the beginning (Gen. 1:1-2, Job 38:8-9), and God summoned the light to shine through the darkness and illuminate the earth.

There also has been considerable debate about the source of the light whether it comes from the same light sources we have today, namely the sun and other heavenly bodies or whether this light is from God’s presence itself as will be the case in the new creation (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). The latter is certainly possible but as was discussed above if God is light there would be no need to call it into view. It would have been there already with His presence. It makes more sense for this light in verse 3 to be coming from a light-bearer that is also a part of the Creation. The problem however is that the light bearers (Heb. *meor*) do not come on the scene until Creation Day 4 (Gen. 1:14-19). I believe this problem could be alleviated simply by remembering the perspective of our observer (in this case God Himself on earth). It is not much of a stretch to envision the early atmosphere of earth as having a cloud cover of some thickness so as to block out the image of the sun. If the original earth was covered in darkness (Gen. 1:2; Job 38:8-9), then it would follow that there was a transition from total darkness to the present clear skies we have today. That transition can be seen on any overcast day. On many of these days we have enough sunlight to go about our daily outside activities while the sun itself remains hidden in cloud cover. Plants still receive enough light to grow and the right wavelengths to perform photosynthesis and thus continue to change the atmosphere by extracting carbon dioxide and replacing it with oxygen. These physical observations along with the Scriptural observation that plants appear on earth (Creation Day 3) before the sun (Creation Day 4), combine to make the more plausible understanding of this light as that being emitted from an already created sun as we know it today. I will discuss the sun more later, but for now it will suffice to say that in Genesis 1:3 it is still behind a cloud cover which will remain thick enough to block its image until Creation Day 4.

And God saw that the light was good. After God summons the light to shine out of the darkness, He looks on it and declares it good. The word here is *tov* (LXX: *kalos*). It is used just 44 times in the OT and carries a wide range of meanings according to TWOT such as practical goodness, desirability, beauty, quality, moral goodness or philosophical goodness. The LXX translation of *kalos* is interesting in that *kalos* is used in the NT to depict more of an outward, noticeable goodness vs. *agathos* which denotes more of an intrinsic good. As an example of the two uses we find in Matt. 7:17 where Jesus says “So every good (*agathos*) tree bears good (*kalos*) fruit”. Note the use of the two words. Every tree that is intrinsically good will naturally bear fruit that is noticeably good to those who look upon it. The LXX splits usage in the Psalms when referring to God or His name between *agathos* and *krestos* (see Ps. 34:9; 52:11; 54:8; 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29). Note that the authors never use *kalos* when referring to God or an attribute of God.

Therefore it appears that God saw in the light an apparent goodness, that it was useful in fulfilling its purpose of lighting the earth. If God is light (1John 1:5) and God alone is good (*agathos*: Matt. 19:17), then it would stand that God's light is intrinsically good being a part of His unique character. From the text there is difficulty in telling if this light in verse 4 has any intrinsic goodness. Rather it is useful in purpose. In my opinion this further evidences this light being a natural light inside God's Creation that is simply used to give light to our planet as opposed to the divine light of God Himself that will supply light in the New Creation (Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

The phrase and God saw that the * was good is repeated on all of the Creation Workdays except Day 2 and is emphasized on Day 6 as "very good". The LXX has added the phrase *kai eiden ho theos hoti kalon* (and God saw that it was good) to verse 8 in an attempt to parallel the other Creation Days, but the phrase is not found in the Hebrew text. We will elaborate more on this later, but it may be fair to assume there was something about the *raqiya* (expanse) on Day 2 that was not yet "good" at that time but it certainly was by Creation Day 6.

Next God separated (Heb. *badal*) the light from the darkness. The Hebrew word *badal* carries the connotation of being distinct from. So there is enough light penetrating the early cloud cover to be distinct from the darkness. This adds further proof of the nature of the light. If God is present everywhere, and John says that in Him there is no darkness (1John 1:5), then there can be no separation between light and darkness because there is no room for true darkness. Our final proof is in verse 5 when God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. The use of these terms is meant to make the listener think of the everyday cycle of daylight and nighttime. When the listener experiences light, it is during the day. Likewise when he experiences darkness, it is during the night. The words *yom* (day) and *laylah* (night) are common in the OT occurring 2268 and 233 times respectively. No other word in the Creation account is so hotly debated than is the word *yom*. Does the word demand a 24-hour interpretation or can it mean a longer period of time? We will look further into this debate shortly, but for now it will suffice to say the meaning in Gen. 1:5a is the portion of time that the observer is in the light whereas the night is the time when he is in darkness.

This observation from the text adds further evidence as to the position of our observer (here God). If God were telling this account from a perspective in space, there would be no day/night experience. Day and night are caused by the rotation of the earth so the only place an observer can experience both is at some place here on earth. If the light is coming from the radiant glory of the omnipresent God, we have already noted that there would be no day/night experience; only day. However if the light is natural, say from the sun, an earth-based observer would experience them both much the way we do today. I believe it is fair to assume the Spirit of God is working on Creation Day 1 from a position on earth and sees both the light of day and the darkness of night as the earth rotates along its axis.

We come next to the refrain and there was evening and there was morning, the first day. This refrain is echoed on all of the successive Creation Workdays but is significantly absent on Creation Day 7. Collins has gone to great lengths on the proper translation of this refrain (p. 55-56). The duplication of the *wayyiqtol* verb *wayehiy* (and there was) demands a duplicate translation which the KJV and NKJV have ignored. If we take the *wayyiqtol* as showing broadly

sequential actions, as it should, then we have an evening followed by a morning. The Hebrew words are *erev* and *voqer* and are used 134 and 239 times respectively. An ancient Israelite listener would have the same experience with these terms as we do today since the earth has been rotating the same for the past 3500 years to be certain. Let us explore the usage a bit further to see if these words are to be taken as literal “evenings” and “mornings”.

The words *erev* and *voqer* occur together in 44 verses. Six of those are for Creation Days 1-6. We will address why they do not occur for Creation Day 7 later. Of the remaining 38 verses, three are referring to non-literal evenings and mornings (Gen. 49:27; Ps. 30:5; 90:6). Here they simply refer to “beginnings” and “ends”. The majority of the verses discuss various laws in the Books of Exodus through Deuteronomy. One thing to remember is that Moses wrote Psalm 90 which uses the words in a non-literal sense in verse 6. While the bulk of other Scriptural usage suggests starting with a literal interpretation, it is within the semantic range of the words to imply simply a “beginning” and an “end”. It is my opinion this non-literal interpretation makes more sense for the Creation Days than does the literal sun-up and sun-down times of the day for a few reasons.

First it is extremely difficult to reconcile a belief in a literal evening and morning if one believes the sun was not created until the fourth Creation Day. We know that morning and evening is dictated by the earth’s rotation bringing a place into and out of sunlight respectively. Without the sun, we cannot have a morning or an evening. While our Hebrew audience would not have known how this process truly works, they most certainly knew morning as when the sun “comes up” and evening as when the sun “goes down”. The remainder of the reasons for taking this non-literally fall into the discussion of the word *yom* (day) below.

At the end of verse 5 it appears that *yom echad* (day one) comes to a close. As mentioned before, the word *yom* is much debated. Young Earth Creationists (YECs) insist the word means a literal 24-hour day while Old Earth Creationists (OECs) believe the word refers here to a longer indefinite period of time. Any Hebrew lexicon will tell us that the word could mean either so we must look at the context. Most knowledgeable YECs will say that the word when used with ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc...) always refers to a 24-hour day. That’s not entirely true and in verse 5, *yom* is used with the cardinal *echad* anyway. Most Biblical scholars treat the word *yom* as a long period of time with ordinal numbers in Hosea 6:2. I agree, however that this usage is rare and at first glance a casual reading in the English Bible lends to a 24-hour interpretation for *yom*. I also agree with the YECs at organizations like Answers In Genesis who say that throughout the first 18 centuries of church history, most Christians believed in a 24-hour interpretation because that is all they had experienced. The idea of longer periods of time was a foreign concept to most people and it did not come about until the mid to late 1700’s. I propose we need to be extremely careful when using the arguments of “simplest, casual reading” and “that’s what most of our Christian Fathers believed for 18 centuries” for two very simple reasons.

First and foremost, God’s Word is a deep inexhaustible treasure and simply reading it casually is not sufficient to understand and grow thereby. I do tend to favor the simpler literal interpretation, but only if it stands up under intensive study and does not contradict other Scripture. If it does not hold up under scrutiny, there MUST be a better alternate interpretation.

Second, it is well documented that most church fathers also believed the sun and other heavenly bodies revolved around the earth for over 16 centuries based on passages like Ps. 104:5 where it says the earth cannot be moved out of place. When scientific discovery led to the opposite some Christians held their ground, but others yielded and came to the conclusion that it was possibly their interpretation of the Bible that was flawed and not the minds and findings of the scientists. Virtually no one still believes in the geocentric model because the evidence is overwhelming. This is a clear proof that human minds are indeed fallible and scientific evidence (as long as it is observable, testable and repeatable) from outside Scripture can be used to interpret Scripture (as long as it does not contradict other parts of Scripture). It is also clear proof that early church fathers were not immune to making faulty interpretations of Scripture when scientific passages were in view.

So as to not fall into these two often snaring traps, we will dig deeper into the meaning of these “Days” according to Scripture knowing full well the church history on the subject. For an outstanding documentation of this, please see Davis Young’s outstanding book “The Bible, Rocks and Time.” If the *yom* are intended to be 24-hour days as we know them then the text will clearly point in that direction upon closer scrutiny. If they are longer periods of time, then not only will the textual evidence point that way, but also then the doors to a possibly ancient earth will be open.

We have already seen the semantic range of *yom*, that it can mean an ordinary day as we know it, a long period of time or just the roughly 12-hour portion of daylight. We have seen that it is used in all senses in the OT regardless of ordinal number modifiers. However we do recognize that it most commonly refers to a 24-hour day. Some notable exceptions are later in Gen. 2:4 where it refers to the entire length of time of Creation, Hosea 6:2 where scholars feel it refers to long periods of time and in Ps. 90:4 where Moses says that a thousand years are like a day that has passed in God’s sight. There is no magic in the number 1,000, but simply that time is meaningless to God. If He operates outside of time, then it would reason that any measurable amount of time here is not felt the same or viewed the same by God. Moses’ statement is later echoed by Peter in 2Pet. 3:8. Again in the future there will be a “Day of the Lord” (e.g. Joel 2:31 and repeated many times in the prophetic Books) in which the events take place in a period of time longer than 24 hours. In each of these exceptions, there is a common theme: the “days” are days such according to God and His activity. If the majority of the uses of *yom* point to 24-hour periods, then it is only because they mostly refer to human day-to-day activities. Our Israelite listener would have known the semantic range of the word and would have understood its uses and limitations. Given that God is the only character in this account, we MUST acknowledge the possibility that these are His days and not our days.

An objector will likely turn us to passages like Exodus 20:8-11 where God uses His creation account to initiate the 7-day work week. The passage says that just as God worked for six days and rested on the seventh, so to are the Israelites to work for six days and rest on the seventh. Again, the casual reading in the English Bible seems to give credence to the 24-hour interpretation. I will suggest that this casual interpretation contradicts the biblical significance of the seventh day. In chapter 4 of Hebrews, the author very clearly tells his listeners that God’s rest of the seventh day continues at the present time. It was not a 24-hour period of time that

gave way to the eighth day. Nowhere in Scripture is there an eighth day which followed the Creation Week. Here is the evidence of a continued seventh Creation Day. First, the writer of Hebrews is quoting from David in Psalm 95:7-11. In this passage God refers to the Day of His rest as “Today.” Heb. 4:4 says that on the seventh day, God rested from His works. Verse 6 says that it still remains for some to enter that rest. Verse 7 says that the Day was still ongoing a long time later in David’s time. Verse 9 says that the Day remains for God’s people to enter His rest. And verse 11 encourages all of us to make every effort to enter that rest. The second piece of evidence was mentioned before in that the refrain “and there was evening, and there was morning, the Xth day” is not found in the Genesis account like it is for the other 6 Days. This is overwhelming biblical evidence that we are currently living in the 7th and final Day of Creation, the Day of Rest. This Day has lasted at least 6,000 years according to the strictest adherence to the biblical genealogies, probably even longer. If this Day is longer than 24 hours, then there is only one purpose to our passage in Exodus 20:8-11: it is only to be used as an analogy. Therefore it cannot be used in a direct apples-to-apples comparison with regard to the meaning of *yom*.

The analogical view allows us to make a sensible comparison in Exodus 20. It implies that God used the word *yom* over other words such as *et* (time) or *olam* (eternity) for two main reasons. First, since God was the only one present during the Creation, He would have had to use terms that the Hebrew listener would understand. Especially a word which could mean a long but finite period of time associated with activity that is unique to God. Secondly, in bringing the word back in Exodus 20, God is able to use His Creation Week as an analog to His people’s work week. We must be honest in saying that if God could create the universe, He could do it in any length of time. There was no need for Him to even wait six days to finish His work. In this regard, the length of the “Day” is not as important as the analogy He would later use in instituting our work week. I believe the better interpretation of Exodus 20 yields an indefinite period of Creative time that the Creator called “day” in order for His people to not only understand but live by its analogy. The use of analogy in the explanation of heavenly things is used elsewhere in Scripture when Moses made the tabernacle and its accessories. Surely Moses did not make an exact, life-size version of the tabernacle, but a smaller copy of the one in heaven (Heb. 8:5; 9:23-24). The heavenly versions were merely the analogs for the human version which is much smaller in scope out of necessity. A human could not duplicate much less comprehend the heavenly version so God gave it to the people at a scale with which it could be grasped. Likewise God called the eons of His Creation time “Days” simply for our benefit to better understand our Creator.

To summarize, the First Creation Day occurred sometime after “the Beginning” (Gen. 1:1-2). God summoned the light to shine out of the darkness on His vantage point on earth (Gen. 1:2-3). God saw that the light was useful in its purpose and thus ended the indefinite period of time He called Day One for our purposes.

It was necessary to go into great detail for these first few verses to help explain some of the groundwork that can be used in the rest of the account. The notes from here on out will be shorter.

Creation Day 2:

Genesis 1:6-8 (ESV)

6 And God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”

7 And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

8 And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

As is the case for the other Creation Workdays, Day 2 starts with the *wayyiqtol* verb *wayyomer* (And [God] said) signifying a continuation of the account. There should be no debate over what the *raqiya* is. Translated as “expanse” or “firmament”, it is defined by God as *shamayim* (heavens). The birds fly in it (1:20), and it is the setting for the heavenly bodies (1:14). Our 21st century minds know that birds do not fly in the same place as the sun. They are separated by 93 million miles. The ancient Hebrew mind did not know that and it is crucial to understand that when interpreting this passage. The *raqiya* appears to be everything from the horizon upward; everything in view as one looks upward. From his vantage point the *raqiya* appeared to be a dome above the earth that rotated around the earth. That is how we should understand the expanse as we read the events of the Creation account.

As with the light in verse 3, the phrase “let be” does not refer to the origination of the expanse but rather to the designation of its purpose. The light was to shine on the earth and the expanse was to separate the waters. Scientifically speaking this most likely refers to the earth’s early atmosphere. The atmosphere in the beginning (Gen. 1:2) was apparently toxic and required the help of photosynthetic organisms to begin to transform it into a habitable place for humans. As mentioned before it is possible these organisms were created in verse 2 as the Spirit of God was “hovering” or “brooding” over the face of the deep. Scientists estimate the content of the early atmosphere was about 80% water vapor, 10% CO₂, 5-7% H₂S, and small amounts of N, CO, H, CH₄ and inert gases. The cyanobacteria would have begun to eradicate the toxins, but the *raqiya* would need the assistance of land plants to complete the task of making a hospitable atmosphere for human beings.

By the close of Day 2 (the refrain of verse 8), the atmosphere was still not ready for animals and humans which may be the reason for the omission of the common phrase “and God saw that it was good”. This phrase is found in every other Workday. While the LXX includes it in an attempt to parallel the other Days, it is not found in the Hebrew and its omission is significant. Something was not quite good yet about the expanse. It was still toxic and fairly opaque. While light was getting through, an observer was not yet able to make out the light-bearers, and no life was yet able to populate it.

Creation Day 3:

Genesis 1:9-13 (ESV)

9 And God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so.

10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

11 And God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing

fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth.” And it was so.

12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

When Creation Day 3 starts we have a poorly lit earth with a toxic atmosphere. When Day 3 ends we will have an earth with enough land vegetation to make an oxygen-rich atmosphere in which land animals and humans will later thrive. But to start, God calls out to the waters under the heavens. Verse 9 is brought to mind in Ps. 104:6-9 where the waters flee at God’s rebuke. In Genesis, God’s rebuke consists of gathering them together into one place. The Hebrew word *qawa* means to “collect”, or here in the niphal stem to “be collected”. The waters were collected in one place, presumably because they were scattered before. Perhaps there were land masses scattered across the globe and God called them tectonically into one supercontinent. This has happened on a number of occasions in the geologic record and verse 9 tells us that this was God’s will in adding form to His then-formless (verse 2) planet.

As the waters are gathered together, the dry land is commanded to appear. Just as *hayah* (to be) does not necessarily mean brought into existence, so to *raah* (to see) does not mean dry land was created on Day 3. It was merely commanded (by using the jussive conjugation as defined above) to appear. The dry land (Heb. *yabashah*) is a term used 16 times in the Hebrew OT. In other places it is used to depict ground that has become dry at God’s command. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea on *yabashah* in Ex. 14:16-29. The verbal form is used in Gen. 8:7, 14 and Josh. 2:10 to record God’s drying of the ground after the Great Flood and the Israelite crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land respectively. Though the geologic record records such events, it should be clear that the events took place because of His divine will.

In verse 10 we see the localizing of the Creation narrative begin. In the beginning the *shamayim* and the *erets* were created. God now defines and narrows the semantic use geographically. The *erets* is now referring to the *yabashah* (dry ground). The *mayim* (waters) are now referring to just the *yam* (or seas). From the text, there appears to be no more going back to the global definition of the words we saw in the beginning (Gen. 1:1-2). Later in Scripture the *yam* is further reduced by adding the name of the sea (e.g. the great sea (Num. 34:6), salt sea (Num. 34:3), Red Sea (Ex. 10:19), etc...).

Like the light that shined on the earth in verse 4, and unlike the toxic skies in verse 7, the land of the earth was seen as good (LXX *kalos*). That is it was good and useful in purpose. Its purpose was to make a habitable place for humans. The next step was to make the atmosphere into its stable breathable form. To do that, God summoned the dry land to appear in order to plant the great plants and forests we observe in the geologic record.

In verse 11 God says “Let the earth sprout vegetation.” In the Hebrew, the jussive form of the verb “to sprout” and the vegetation that sprouted are derivatives of the same root. It reads *tadeshe haarets deshe* (let sprout...the earth...vegetation). Similar uses of a noun and verb form of the same root are common in the OT. This is the main action of God’s planting. The text goes on to elaborate on the kinds of *deshe*. He summons the *esev* (low lying plants) and the *ets*

(trees here modified by *periy* (fruit)). The command is that the *deshe* will yield seed according to their kind. The phrase “yield seed” is *mazriya zera*; another verb-noun couplet having the same root.

The word *min* has been surrounded by much needless debate. It has been drawn into the Creation vs. Evolution debate, and rightly so as it clearly states that plants (and later animals) are to reproduce after their own kind. Nowhere in Scripture do we see reproduction across kinds. It is used 31 times in the OT, 30 of which are in the Books of Moses. The term “kind” has never successfully been imbedded into the modern taxonomy. Some suggest “Species”, some “Genus”, some “Class”, but it appears that this is a classification across which no reproduction can take place. I believe we should leave it at that as there is no clear equivalent in modern taxonomy. At the very least we can say that it is lower than “Kingdom” and “Phylum” and therefore does not give support to any kind of biological evolution from a single-celled common ancestor. This argument is simple and it is supported by both Scripture and the geologic record where ancestral relationships between higher taxa are not found.

As He did with the dry land, God looks at the vegetation, both the low lying plants and the trees and determines that they are good (LXX: *kalos*). Their purpose is clear in that they appear on land before the land animals and especially human beings in order to change the toxic expanse made on Day 2 into a breathable atmosphere. Indeed, the geologic record shows that with the appearance of land plants, the oxygen levels in the atmosphere “burst” upwards to even above present levels.

This seems a good point to address the extents of the Creation account so far. Many people have argued that this account is global in nature meaning not only does the use of *erets* indicate the global earth is in view, but also that it mentions or categorizes everything in existence. I have argued the case already for a narrower view of the land is in view rather than the global earth. Now that life is mentioned in the account we can address the other topic. Is all plant life brought about on Creation Day 3 and should we take it that all plant life is mentioned or categorized in the account? Only two types of vegetation are mentioned, the low lying plants and the trees. If we hold to a global extent here, we must note that none of the aquatic plants are mentioned. Also, since trees are further defined as “fruit trees”, it leaves out tall non-fruit trees such as redwoods, sequoias, pine trees, etc... It becomes difficult to say when God made plants like the aquatic bladderworts and the buttercup when reading this passage. I believe a better interpretation is one that is limited in scope to either a specific area of land (perhaps Eden or the broader Mesopotamia) or one that sees the unmentioned “kinds” of vegetation as unimportant in the theme of the Creation account. In other words, aquatic plants play an insignificant role in setting the stage for God’s ultimate creation, mankind. Such organisms would have seemed irrelevant to an original audience or they would have no idea what they were because they were outside of their experience.

As the third Creation Day comes to a close in verse 13, we see that God has now effectively formed the formless earth from verse 2 and is now about to fill the void earth with soulful life.

Creation Day 4:

Genesis 1:14-19 (ESV)

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,

15 and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth.” And it was so.

16 And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars.

17 And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

If Creation Day 3 is a favorite for global-extent Young Earth Creationists because the English versions seem to suggest land plants were created before fish, which is contrary to the geologic record, then Day 4 is an often used argument for Old Earthers. After all, how can you have three 24-hour days before God creates the sun? To me it seems like both of these views are incorrect because they invoke an over-literalistic reading. I find the Analogical-Day interpretation better fits the biblical and scientific data. That is, since these are God’s Workdays, He uses terminology we can understand and would later use to define our workweek (Ex. 20). No human was yet around to gauge the lengths Days 1-3 by the same time standards we use today. Some YECs claim that the sun’s creation and use in determining days (verse 14) proves a 24-hour duration. OECs believe the sun’s absence in Days 1-3 proves at least that the first three Days are longer than 24 hours. Let’s see what the text says.

Verse 14 begins with the typical Creation Day-opening *wayyomer* (And [God] said). The jussive form of *hayah*, as we have seen before, does not imply the origination of the lights. Other evidence from the text that they existed before Creation Day 4 is the use of *asa* (to make) in verse 16 and the verb *nathan* (to place) in verse 17. We have studied *asa* before and nowhere in Scripture is *nathan* used to depict the beginning of something’s existence. Consider its use in Genesis 9:13 where God sets (*nathan*) His rainbow in the clouds as a covenant between Him and the earth that He would never again send a Flood to wipe out humanity. We know the physical and optical properties of a rainbow and we know they must have existed before the Flood (all that is needed is light [Gen. 1:3] and water droplets in the atmosphere [Gen. 1:6-7; 2:6]). Therefore the rainbow was not a brand new creation in Noah’s day.

Unfortunately the misleading translation of *meor* as “lights” appears in virtually all English versions and does not help in the interpretation. A *meor* is actually the light-bearer (as in Young’s Literal Translation: “luminaries”). If the light from the sun is the *or*, then the sun itself as the bearer of the light is the *meor*. The word is used 19 times in the OT and is here translated in the LXX as *phoster* whereas the light is translated *phos*.

It is obvious as we read on that the light-bearers are the sun, moon and stars. This is an important instance where we cannot confuse our 21st century knowledge with that of the original audience. On the one hand, we now know that the moon does not bear light, it reflects the sun’s light. But from the perspective of an earth-based observer, the moon appears to give off abundant nighttime light. On the other hand it is useful in the application of NT Scripture

knowing that a light-bearer can either give off or reflect light onto a body. Paul says in Phil. 2:15 that Christians are to be *phosteres* in the dark world. In other words, we are to reflect the light of the Son into the world so as to be a good witness to those who are lost in darkness.

Even though the stars are mentioned parenthetically in verse 16, there is reason to believe they are included in the summoning command given in verse 14 as well. This is because of the purpose of the command. They are 1.) to separate the day from the night, 2.) to be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and 3.) to give light upon the earth. The sun, moon and all the stars fulfill these purposes even today. First, the sun is the greatest of the light-bearers in that it alone separates the day from the night. This gives further credence to the observer being earth-based and not heavenly-based. The light from the sun is sufficient to drown out all light coming from the other heavenly bodies during the daytime. During the night, a full moon can light up the sky enough to read a book.

The second purpose is actually three-fold. They are to be for signs. The ancients placed all the stars within constellations which were used in navigation as well as in the myths of their time. Next they were to be for seasons. The ancients knew exactly when the summer and winter solstices were based on the position of the sun and therefore knew when to plant and harvest their crops. They also were aware of certain constellations that were only up in the sky certain times of the year. Finally they were to be for days and years. The absence of the preposition “for” (the Hebrew letter *lamech*) before the word “years” forces a combination of these last two terms. The preposition occurs only before “signs”, “seasons” and “days” (interestingly the KJV had it right and the NKJV incorrectly joins “signs and seasons”). Young Earth Creationists argue this command as proof that these Days were 24-hour periods based on this verse. It is true that the word “day” (*yom*) is the same throughout the passage, but we have already seen the entire semantic range used in Scripture. In this verse alone we see it used as the 12-hour daylight portion and the 24-hour time period. This in no way limits the Creation Days as 24-hour time periods. Each usage must be interpreted by its context and the overarching theme we have noted is that these are God’s Days and they are not limited to the solar days we experience today. There is no need to link the sun-based “day” in verse 14 with the Creation “Day” in verse 19 from the context.

By stating that God set them in the expanse to give light to the earth twice, the author clearly wants to portray the importance of this purpose of the *meor*. They are to rule (Heb. *masal*), or be the dominant figures in the expanse during, the day and night. Earlier in verse 5 day and night were defined as the light and dark periods the earth-based observer experiences during the planet’s rotation. Now, through the dissipating clouds of the improving expanse, He is able to see the governing bodies: the sun and moon. He also made the stars. This parenthetical statement is included to let the audience know that God is also the maker of the distant *meor* in the expanse. Though we now know that many of the stars are far larger than the moon and even the sun, an earth-based observer in the fifteenth century BC would surely not have been able to deduce that fact. To him, the stars are minor luminaries in the nighttime sky. They still fulfill the purpose of helping discern seasons and times and even giving light to the earth, but the moon was clearly the governing body of the night because of its dominant presence from our perspective. If we interpret this passage from a heavenly-based perspective we will clearly contradict it because of what we now know about the sizes and luminosities of the heavenly

bodies. The author and audience are clearly earth-based. God's *meor* are deemed good (that is they are fully able to fulfill their purposes) and the fourth Creation Day comes to a close.

Creation Day 5:

Genesis 1:20-23 (ESV)

20 And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."

21 So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

As the narrative continues, a new *wayyomer elohim* signifies the beginning of a new Creation Day. On Day 5, God brings about something completely new, not from existing material. He creates (*bara* v. 21) the *nephesh chayyah*. This term is difficult to translate and is here rendered living creature. The LXX translates as *psyche zoon* which is literally soul-like life. I believe we can reasonably infer these are soul-like living things, very different than the plant life encountered on Day 3. Though it is possible that God used the raw materials of the earth to make the bodies of the creatures (as inferred from Gen. 2:19), He most definitely divinely created the soul-like or life component of the living creature. Later in Leviticus 17:11, we learn that the life of a creature is in its blood. I believe this is the significant new creation on Day 5. In saying that the creatures of Day 6 were made from the ground in Gen. 2:19, the Bible speaks against biological evolution of any kind (even theistic evolution). Here, the bodies of the swarms of living creatures in the water likely were made from the raw materials of the earth, but the life that was in them was created by God. Though the text does not say the birds are included in the *nephesh chayyah*, it is assumed that they are because they are listed as an object to the verb *bara* in v. 21.

So, what exactly are the great sea creatures? The Hebrew word here is *tannin*, which is used 14 times in the OT. The LXX translates here as *ketos*, which is a huge fish. It is safe to say that we do not know what this creature is, as the *tanninim* appear to be different things in other uses of the word. For example, in Exodus 7:9, 10, and 12, it is the serpent that Moses' staff turned into (cf Deut 32:33; Ps 91:13). It is often translated as 'dragon' or 'sea monster' in the poetic and prophetic Books (see Job 7:12; Ps. 74:13; 148:7; Ezek 29:3; 32:2; Jer 51:34; Is 27:1; 51:9). It is even translated 'jackals' in Lam. 4:3, although this is most likely a confusion in the Masoretic Text with *tannim*, which is the plural of *tan* (jackal). We are left with no certainty as to what the *tanninim* are. But we can be certain they dwell in the waters (Heb. *mayim*). The LXX translation of *ketos* is curious in that it is the *ketos* that swallows up the prophet Jonah (Jon. 2:1-2, 11). Perhaps the *tanninim* of Gen 1:21 are the large whales, then, rather than the mystical dragon, or even an ancient aquatic dinosaur. There just are too many various translations to pin down the exact identity of these creatures.

It should be noted here that the Day-Age interpretation seems to fail at this point. Geologically we know that aquatic life appeared on earth before plant life by over 100 million years. The only

way around that is to say that there is a local extent to the list of creatures given in this particular passage. Perhaps the *nephesh chayyah* here do not include creatures like trilobites, jellyfish or brachiopods. Perhaps the author's intent is to only focus on the creatures with which the audience is familiar such as dolphins, fish, sharks and whales. This interpretation does sound reasonable and likely would make more sense to a fifteenth century BC Hebrew listener. Another approach is the Analogical-Day view which does not necessitate strict sequential order but allows for some overlap in a generally sequential account. In this case, the list may be global, but it does not require the appearance of land plants before trilobites. While I do not know the correct interpretation, I prefer the Analogical-Day view with a local extent reading. In my interpretation, the earth was primed for the appearance of aquatic life and birds that would be familiar to the listening audience. The fact that trilobites pre-date land plants does not contradict the passage because it was not the author's intent to even mention trilobites to an audience that had never seen one.

Most YEC's regard this list as global in extent. They insist the Scripture teaches trilobites and dolphins were both created on Day 5 which is 48 hours after land plants were created. This interpretation fails on certain levels. First, it contradicts the fossil evidence. Even if one adheres to a 6,000 year old earth in which the fossils formed as a result of Noah's Flood, the evidence still requires that land plants postdate trilobites because of the laws of superposition and the fact that nowhere do they occur together in the rock record. Second, our Hebrew listener would have no idea what a trilobite is, unless he experienced one in his surroundings. Since trilobites lived in deep marine settings, that would never happen. Therefore he would not have understood the passage that way. Third, where do the aquatic plants fit into the global view of Creation? Are they grouped with the land plants on Day 3? Or are they grouped with the aquatic creatures on Day 5? One can only guess an answer based on reading into the text, or *eisegesis*. The text does not speak to this, so a local view is to be preferred.

We find in this passage another evidence that God's command to "be" in Genesis 1 does not necessitate the creation of the subject. Here God speaks to the waters that they should swarm with swarms of living creatures. Directly following this is the verb *bara*. When something new is created, the author carefully uses the term *bara*. Here, we are to infer that the *nephesh chayyah* were divinely created after God's command to swarm. The account of the light (Day 1) and the sun, moon and stars (Day 4) use the verb *hayah* but there is no mention of *bara*. It appears from this text that the author is going out of his way to make sure the listener knows the aquatic creatures and birds are new special creations of God and not the rehashed appearance of something previously created. It then follows that the light and sun are the appearances of something previously created by the purposeful absence of *bara*.

Another interesting point made in this passage is the refined definition of *erets*. We saw in verse 10 that *erets* was narrowed from the globe (v. 1) to the dry land. Likewise here we see it only as the land portion of the globe. There is a clear distinction between creatures of the sea and creatures of the earth. In verse 22 God blesses them and tells the sea creatures to multiply and fill the seas (*mayim*) and the birds are to fill the earth (*erets*). Moses clearly intends for the audience to see these two terms as opposites with no overlap. The birds are to multiply and fill the land portions of the earth just as they do today. They do not fill the seas because that is not what God commanded. With that blessing, Day 5 comes to a close.

Creation Day 6:

Genesis 1:24-31 (ESV)

24 And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so.

25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

29 And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.

30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

As Creation Day 5 closes the seas are abounding with life, the land is full of plants, and the skies are filled with birds. The plant life helped to make an expanse suitable to sustain life on land. By the end of Day 6 we will see that everything God had made, including the expanse, is seen as “very good”. Certainly by the beginning of Day 6, the atmosphere was virtually the same as it is today. Theories such as the “Canopy Theory” which are attempts to explain the abundance of water necessary to cover the globe during Noah’s Flood are not only unfounded biblically, but scientifically impossible. The expanse is called “very good” by the end of Day 6. This means that birds are able to fly (as seen during Day 5) and land animals and humans are able to live and breathe normally. Based on the size and albedo of the earth, it should have an average surface temperature of -2 degrees Fahrenheit, but because the atmosphere is opaque to most of the infrared waves reflecting off the Earth’s surface, the average surface temperature is 59 degrees. This is due to the greenhouse gases in our atmosphere (mostly water vapor-1% and carbon dioxide-0.038%). Since water vapor accounts for about 2/3 of the greenhouse effect on earth, an atmosphere that once contained abundantly more water vapor would make conditions too hot to sustain any life on earth. Surely this would not be considered “very good” by God after He creates human beings.

Day 6 begins with another *wayyomer elohim*, this time with God calling to the earth to bring forth living creatures according to their kinds. In contrast to Day 5 where the living beings (*nephesh chayyah*) are created (*bara*), here the *nephesh chayyah* are brought forth (Heb. *yatsa*). This is similar to the word in the parallel passage in 2:19 where the land creatures are formed (*yatsar*) “out of the ground”. In verse 25 it says that they were made (*asa*) by God. This does

not imply that they were created at all, but that they were made from existing materials namely the ground (Heb. *adamah*). There is nothing new in the land creatures. They are living creatures (*nephesh chayyah*), but the quality that makes something a “living creature” (i.e. its lifeblood - Lev. 17:11) was created on Day 5. Therefore the author is not able to say that any soulful land creatures are created (*bara*), but rather they are the land equivalents of the sea and air creatures made on Day 5.

It is said here that three land-based kinds of living creatures were formed by God on Day 6: the *behemah* (mostly larger domesticated four-footed animals; LXX-*tetrapodo*), the *remes* (mostly smaller four-footed mammals and reptiles; LXX-*herpedo-reptile*), and the *chaytho erets* (beasts of the earth, wild beasts; LXX-*therion*). One can immediately notice that this is not a global list of every land animal. For example, where is mention of insects (most likely the *sherets* of Leviticus 11:20-23)? And where do aquatic mammals (whales, dolphins), flying mammals (bats) and aquatic reptiles (plesiosaurs) fit in the creation account? Day 5? Day 6? It is true that God’s taxonomy is different than the one man invented, but the dilemmas in cataloguing every created creature into the Genesis 1 Creation account seem insurmountable. The questions that need to be addressed are “Is it the intent of the author to fully mention every category of living creature in Genesis 1?” and “Would the original Hebrew listener have been aware of such creatures as bacteria, dinosaurs and kangaroos based on his experience in the Mesopotamian region?” My answer to both questions is “NO”. There is no biblical or extra-biblical evidence that the Israelites knew about dinosaurs or microorganisms. In my opinion, most global-extent YEC’s are in the unenviable position of having to explain on which Day most of these difficult creatures were made and the reason for Moses telling about creatures with which neither he nor his audience had any experiential knowledge.

God saw that they were good for fulfilling their purpose in verse 25. By this point in time on Day 6, the entire planet is filled with plants and living creatures both on land and in the sea. The earth that was formless and void in verse 2 now has form and is filled. God is now prepared to create one last thing. It is to be the climax of the entire Creation account. It is to be God’s most special and personal component of His Creation. It is the creature that gets the most attention in the narrative and that receives the greatest blessing and privilege in all Creation. It is the human being. Only after the special creation of the human could God deem His Creation complete and “very good”.

The text is extremely clear on the intimate process in which He created the first humans. In verse 26 we have another *wayyomer elohim*. This time He says Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. Some questions are now raised. Why the switch from the jussive (“Let be”) to the cohortative (“Let Us”)? Who is with God when He says “Us”? What is meant by image and likeness and are they the same?

First, just as the jussive conjugation is simply an imperative in the third person, the cohortative is a command in the first person. The Creator switches to the first person to show His intimate connection to this particular created thing. It shows His personal desire to get up close and take extra care to create this being just right, which as we will see means in the very image of Himself.

Second, who is the Us? This has been discussed at great length. The options are 1.) There are multiple Gods doing the creating, 2.) He is referring to all the created beings (angels) who are with Him or 3.) He is referring to Himself in a way consistent with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (One God in three Persons: Father, Son and Spirit). The entirety of Scripture that follows is very clear that God is God alone and there is no equal, so that rules out the first. Similarly, since nowhere in Scripture is it said that the angels or any other created being were made in the image of God, the second can be ruled out because of the phrasings Our image and Our likeness. Since we have already seen the Spirit of God (verse 2), the logical interpretation is that the multiple Persons of the singular God are in view here.

Lastly, what are the image (Heb. *tselem*) and the likeness (Heb. *demuth*) of God and are they the same thing? Collins has an excellent write-up on this (Genesis 1-4, pp. 61-67) so we will not belabor the point here. Basically from the usage throughout Scripture the two terms are interchangeable. Also the LXX translates *demuth* as *homoiosis* and *eikon* interchangeably in this passage and in Gen. 5:1, 3. According to TWOT “God’s image obviously does not consist in man’s body which was formed from earthly matter, but in his spiritual, intellectual, moral likeness to God from which his animating breath came” (p.767).

To summarize, when God made man He made something special. He started by taking ordinary clay and made a body, but He also then got up close and personal and created (*bara-v.27*) him in His own image. This, as we have seen, is very different than any other created thing in this account. Our moral, spiritual and intellectual being is what truly separates man from any other creature. This image we bear completely rules out the possibility of chance evolution. It is the signature mark of our Creator.

This man (Heb. *adam*), and all mankind (based on the third person plural form of the verb), was to have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth (v. 26). This verb *radah* (to have dominion) occurs 21 times in the OT and generally speaks of human rule versus a divine rule. Man is to rule over the fish and birds of Day 5 and the *behemah* and *remes* of Day 6 as well as all the earth (*erets*). It is interesting that the wild beasts of the earth (*chaytho erets*) in verse 24 are not mentioned here. It is possible that that was intentional as we do not currently seem to rule over the wild beasts, but the phrase all the earth would seem to include these beasts. Are humans really only supposed to rule over the domesticated animals and small reptiles? Probably not, as the phrase all the earth picks up the pieces of anything left off the list here. The Hebrew listener would most likely get the idea that the entire living Creation would be subject to the original created man. The term *erets* here describes the living portion of the earth. Man certainly has no rule over geologic events of the physical earth such as volcanoes and earthquakes.

If the listener did not get enough of a sense of the specialness of his creation from verse 26, he most certainly would from verse 27. The verse begins with the *wayyiqtol* form of the verb *bara* (create). Since this verb is only used to show something new created by God it obviously refers to the creation of man in His image. There is nothing new or special about our bodies except that they are called “good” with all Creation in verse 31. They are useful in fulfilling their purpose. But what’s new with man is his moral, spiritual and intellectual likeness to God. So crucial is this point that the author goes out of his way to make the reader stop and ponder it. The verb

bara is used three times in this verse and the other two times stop the storyline momentarily while the point is stressed. The final two uses of *bara* are in the perfect tense. The reader is to make no mistake that he is part of a “kind” that was created by God in His image. In His image he was created. Male and female were created by God. This is the climactic point of the entire Creation narrative. In a story that starts with the creation of a flat infinitely large universe which contains over 10 sextillion (10 with 21 zeros) stars arranged predictably in roughly 100 billion galaxies and an earth with as many as 10 million species of living organisms, mankind lies in sole position as the masterpiece of God’s work. May the reader not have any doubt.

The storyline picks up again in verse 28 with another *wayyiqtol* verb. This must occur after the creation of the woman which we will see in 2:21-23. God blesses (Heb. *barak*) them and tells them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. The first part of the blessing is identical to the one He gave the aquatic creatures and birds on Day 5. Instead of filling the seas, man is to fill the *erets* or the land portion of the earth. He also is to subdue (*khavash*) it. According to TWOT the word choice “implies that creation will not do man’s bidding gladly or easily and that man must now bring creation into submission by main strength.” This seems to portray an original Creation that is much the same as we experience today and contradicts the notion that the Fall of man in Genesis 3 is the culprit for the physical evils we know in the present world. There is a tendency to read into Scripture a certain mysticism or fairy tale-like quality to the natural world in the beginning. We must be careful not to practice such eisegesis and just take the text itself and make sound exegetical interpretations. There is no biblical evidence that the physical world at the time of Adam’s creation was any different than the one we live in today. Finally, to repeat verse 26, man is to have dominion (*radah*) over an implied “all” living creatures.

In verse 29 the account continues with another *wayyomer elohim* (and God said). This time it follows with an emphatic *hinneh*, often translated “behold!” or “look!”. It occurs 879 times in the OT and is typically used to draw the listener’s attention to the important point that follows. It just happens that this point is hotly debated. It is the subject of dietary restrictions of people and animals before the Fall in Genesis 3. Most global-extent YECs believe that this is a command given by God that only plants are to be eaten, not meat. Therefore, the *nephesh chayyah* including Adam and Eve were all originally herbivorous. Others, mostly OEC’s believe that this statement is local or limited in extent and is not exclusive to the option of eating meat. The implication is that if meat was eaten, then death occurred before the Fall of Adam in Genesis 3. Some feel that this diminishes the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Naturally, others say that animal death has no bearing on Christ’s sacrifice because Romans 5:12 says that death came to “all men” when Adam sinned in Genesis 3. They note it does not say anything about animal death. Again, it is important to only read what the text says when forming an interpretation.

Remember on Day 3 in verse 11 God commanded the vegetation to sprout. This was the general term *deshe*. It then consisted of the *esev* (grass and low-to-the-ground-vegetation) yielding seed and the *ets periy* (fruit trees). In verse 29, God gives man the *esev* and the *ets periy* for food. In verse 30, God gives the all the *nephesh chayyah yereq esev* (green plants) for food. In my opinion, the lists given are extremely limited and local in extent (e.g. what about corn and nuts?). Surely the command is not all-inclusive with regards to all the known vegetation, so why should it be exclusive of meat? Objectors will be quick to point out that Genesis 9:3 is God’s

declaration to man and animals that meat may be eaten after the Flood. Again, the text speaks for itself. In that verse God gives man the *remes* or the small reptiles and four-footed rodents for food. No other variety of meat is mentioned here, not even cattle or other beasts that are known for their good meat. Note also He does not offer it to animals. This would seem to imply that some animals were already carnivorous. The only restriction was to not eat the blood of the animal.

Other problems with an originally herbivorous Creation are both biblical as well as scientific in nature. There would have been severe biological changes in order to make the carnivores we know today from an existing herbivore. For instance, a carnivore's teeth, claws and digestive system are suited for capturing, killing and digesting other animals. There is no such change recorded in scripture (not even in the curse of Genesis 3) and there is a long history of carnivorous activity in the fossil record. Also, what about the aquatic creatures? Not only is there no mention of aquatic vegetation for them to eat, there is now way for a whale to come on land and eat the green plants God gave them in verses 29-30. Rather the simplest interpretation is to think that whales ate the same things they do today (i.e. plankton, fish and in some cases seals).

It appears that from verses 29-30, that God is giving a partial list of food to His creatures. There is no reason to read into the text that God is only giving vegetation as it is obvious that not all vegetation is listed here. These are menu items, but the full menu is not given. The list is representative and as such it is difficult to say that anything is excluded potentially even meat.

As Creation Day 6 closes we see another *hinneh* drawing the listener's attention to the fact that God looks at all He has made (from the beginning and on through the Creation Week) and declares it very good. These are sadly two of the most divisive words in the Christian church. In Hebrew it reads *tov meod*. In the LXX it is *kala lian*. Whereas Days 1, 3, 4 and 5 were characterized by the phrase "and God saw that it was good", Day 6 emphasizes the goodness and completeness of His Creation. Creation was not very good until He made the man and the woman. So why the division?

Not unrelated to the previous discussion, most global-extent YECs interpret this very good to be essentially synonymous with "perfect, containing nothing that would prove detrimental to any part of Creation". In their book "Coming to Grips with Genesis", edited by Terry Mortenson and Thane Ury (2008), several examples of what some church fathers say are excluded in a very good Creation are given. Things like violent wind and water, fire, frost, thunder, unseasonable rain, drought, hail, volcanoes, earthquakes, horrid rocks, and frightful precipices (ch. 14: pp. 399-423) are the result of Adam's sin according to great church fathers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Wesley. Today many Christians still believe this led by ministries such as Answers in Genesis (AIG) and the Institute of Creation Research (ICR). Others believe that these are natural phenomena either created by God or act according to the physical laws he set in motion at Creation and are not related to the Fall of Man.

So what exactly did God mean when He said it was very good? Did He mean perfect, free from natural evil of any kind? Or did He mean it was complete and fully able to fulfill its purpose? Scripture tells us. The phrase *tov meod* is found four times in the OT (Judg. 18:9; and Jer. 24:2-3). In the Book of Judges, five valiant warriors from the Tribe of Dan set out for Laish to spy on

that land to take it as part of their inheritance. When they came back to report, they urged their fellow Danites to take the land saying, “we have seen the land (*erets*), and behold (*hinneh*), it is very good (*to vah meod*).” This phrasing sounds very similar to Genesis 1. First, we see that *erets* is properly translated as the local term “land” rather than the nonsensical global “earth”. Second we have an attention getting *hinneh*. This is followed by the phrase very good. What did the Danites consider the land to be? Surely not an unblemished, perfect tract of land with no possibility of an earthquake, volcano or anything else that might prove detrimental to human life. No, rather the land was fit for them to call home, it was “spacious” and “there is no lack of anything (Judg. 18:10).

Furthermore, the Apostle Paul says in 1Tim. 4:4 that “everything created by God is good (*kalos*).” Specifically referring to the institution of marriage and to food, Paul says that these things (and everything else which God created) are good. Paul does not mention that these were once good and because of man’s sin they ceased being good when God cursed them. No, the Bible teaches that God’s Creation WAS and IS good. Again, the word *kalos* refers to a useful or outwardly-appearing goodness. Paul certainly felt that the things God created were still good in his day.

Therefore since the Bible teaches that Creation is still good at the present, we should be careful not to read more into Scripture than what is truly there. Despite their great contributions to the Church, men like Luther, Calvin, Wesley and their modern day followers have failed to realize the real-world implications of their stance on the “goodness” of God’s Creation. It seems their lack of knowledge about how God’s Creation works led them to a faulty understanding of His Word. A world without the so-called natural evils of earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, landslides, tides, etc... is not a “good” world: it is a dead world. These are all consequences of plate tectonics. These natural processes are largely responsible for things like fertile soils, ore deposits, accumulations of oil and natural gas among other things. Without plate tectonics we would have little to none of the above mentioned products. We can view them as products of sin or long-term provision of God. We will see more biblical evidence for plate tectonics in the pre-Fall world in Genesis 2.

The implications of the interpretation I have laid out are thus: 1.) with the existence of plate tectonics in the original Creation there is a possibility of animal death via an earthquake or volcanic eruption or some other catastrophe, 2:) if plate tectonics and animal death occurred before the Fall and the Flood then we would expect hydrocarbon accumulations before the Flood (and this is a biblical fact in Genesis 6:14 (pitch: LXX-*asphaltos* – a biodegraded oil), and 3:) if these circumstances existed before Adam’s sin then it follows that the natural world was largely unaffected by the Curse of Genesis 3 (i.e. all Creation is not fallen and cursed). These implications may be hard to swallow for some, but I believe the teaching of Scripture is clear, and there is no possible way to fathom a “very good” world without such natural phenomena without creating a mystical fairy tale world in which the following are impossible: a sheep falling off a cliff and dying, a fruit fly being swallowed by a larger animal, an ant being stepped on, rainwater collecting and slurring down the side of a hill and drowning an insect, a fish being trapped on a shoal as the tide goes out and suffocating, etc... Such situations just happen. There is no need to think that they only happen because of sin. There is no biblical basis for that

position. Creation is still “very good”. Only a “very good” Creation can clearly display the divine attributes of the Creator “since the creation of the world” (Rom. 1:20).

Much more could be said about these two words and I will address more during the discussion of the Fall and the Flood. For now, we all know and agree that God was pleased with His Creation calling it “very good”. After He was satisfied with the whole of His work we find the sixth and final refrain. God’s Creation is complete.

Creation Day 7:

Genesis 2:1-3 (ESV)

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done.

3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

After the close of Creation Day 6, the storyline continues with the *wayyiqtol* verb *wayekhullu* (and they were finished) signifying that by the start of Day 7 God’s creative work was completely finished. The heavens and the earth which began in the beginning before Creation Day 1 and which were formless and void were now completely fashioned and full; they and all their host (*tsava*). This is a singular noun that encompasses all of the created things that fill both heaven and earth.

Upon finishing His work God then rested on the seventh Day. This word (*shavath*) is from the same root as the word *shabbath* or more popularly The Sabbath. The LXX translates it with *katapauo*. The word literally means to cease and desist, in this case from working. The Sabbath is a day of rest for the Hebrews just as the seventh Day of the Creation Week was a Day of rest for God (Ex. 20: 8-11). It is a day for His people to enter into and enjoy His rest. It is also another debated topic as to just what this rest is and how long did God’s rest last: perhaps is it continuing today? The implications are that if the Creation Day 7 is longer than a 24 hour period, so too could the other Creation Days be longer periods of time. I believe we have shown already that the Creation Days are God’s Workdays and as such cannot be put into terms of the duration we experience today, namely 24 hours. This is proved by the analogical language of Exodus 20:8-11 where God ordains the human workweek based on His Workweek. He used language in Genesis 1 that the reader would understand and be able to use as an analogy once God delivers His Sabbath Law in Exodus. If God would have told his people that He used billions of years to create the universe, the listeners would have had no basis for understanding God’s Sabbath. The Hebrew listener would have understood that the word Day in Genesis 1 would not necessarily be a 24-hour day, but he could easily relate that Day to his own 24-hour day upon hearing the Sabbath command by means of analogy. In fact, a detailed look at the text demands they be much longer than 24 hours. Some of the best evidence for this is found on Day 7.

Day 7 takes up just these three verses in the account, but one striking feature is the lack of the refrain. If this were truly a literal 168-hour week would we not expect the refrain “And there was evening, and there was morning, day seven?” The reader would expect this ending and

would have expected that day 8 would follow, then day 9, on up until the day he is living. The text does not say or even infer that.

The text does say that “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that He had done in creation.” Creation was complete on Day 6, and Day 6 clearly ended in 1:31. Then God rested on Day 7. No ending to Day 7 is given in the text. It turns out there is further biblical and scientific evidence that this Day did not end and is in fact still continuing today. We will examine the biblical evidence first.

This passage is directly referenced in the Book of Hebrews. The following text is Heb. 4:1-11 (ESV).

- 1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.
- 2 For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened.
- 3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest,’ ” although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.
- 4 For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”
- 5 And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.”
- 6 Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience,
- 7 again he appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”
- 8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.
- 9 So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,
- 10 for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.
- 11 Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

The first thing to note is that the author refers directly to Genesis 2:1-3 in verses 4 and 10. The word both times is *katapausis*, the same word in noun form that is used in Genesis (verse 4 is actually an exact quote so there is no doubting the reference.) Also, verse 3 says that those who believe (in Jesus Christ as their savior) enter this rest. This seems to suggest it is ongoing at present. If this isn’t enough, the author beats home this very point giving specific references to time. Verse 3 contains a quote from Psalm 95:11 in which David writes about the hardness of the hearts of the Hebrews as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. As God puts it, “they will not enter my rest” (LXX-*katapausis*). The Israelites wandered in the desert from 1446-1406 BC. Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, but this is not the rest that God was referring to (verse 8). In verse 7, the author again quotes David in Psalm 95:7 as, significantly, using the word “today”. David wrote that Psalm around 1000 BC. At the time David wrote that, God’s rest was apparently still ongoing and available to those who wished to join Him. Since neither Joshua nor David were able to offer this rest themselves, the author of Hebrews claims in verse 9 that the chance to enter the rest continues on to his day. Hebrews was written around AD 60. No event has happened to indicate this rest has ceased since then, so it stands that anyone

who trusts in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins will still enter God's rest. The biblical evidence is clear and consistent. God's rest in Genesis 2:1-3 continues on to this very day. Creation Day 7, God's Sabbath Day of rest has not yet ended. When will it end? Most likely when Christ returns to set up His kingdom. Since Day 7 is at the very least 6,000 to 10,000 years long in duration, there is no reason whatsoever that the other Days of Creation could not be millions or even billions of years long. Again, the Days are God's Days, not necessarily those we are used to.

When we see the Bible so clearly tell us that God ceased his creative work on the Sixth Day, we should expect the natural world to tell us the same story. It is well established from the fossil record as well as historical records and observations that humans are the very last organisms to appear on earth. There is no record of any new "kinds" of animal or plant life appearing after Adam and Eve (the mention of thorns and thistles in the Curse in Genesis 3 does not mean that they were created at that time). As expected, the scientific evidence is in support of the biblical account.

As the first pericope comes to a close, it seems good to now set the stage for the second pericope (Gen. 2:4-25). We have found that the Creation Days of Genesis 1:1-2:3 are God's Workdays. They are of unspecified length and for the most part chronological although some overlap may occur as it was not the author's primary focus to dwell on such matters that unfortunately are a part of heated debate today. There has been some misunderstanding with the second Creation pericope that I hope to help clear up. Some say it contradicts the first. Some say it takes bits and pieces of the first but the primary focus is the creation of man. Others say it fits nicely inside the Sixth Creation Day and there is no contradiction. I will make the suggestion now that we will see it does not contradict Gen 1:1-2:3 at all and fits nicely in its entirety inside Day 6. Using the same grammatical rules outlined at the beginning of the last pericope we can begin to interpret Genesis 2:4-25.

The Land Before Adam:

Genesis 2:4-6 (ESV)

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

5 When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground,

6 and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground—

There has been some debate as to the boundaries of the first two pericopies. I will leave that to the literary experts, but say that I agree with Collins that it makes the most sense for verse 4 to begin the second pericope. The evidence lies in that the *toledoth* (generations) usually begins a new section (see also Gen. 5:1; 10:1; 11:10,27) and in the chiasmic nature of the verse. The chiasm reads: (A) heavens - (B) earth - (C) created - (C') made - (B') earth - (A') heavens. This suggests that the verse should not be split and should be used to introduce the next section. While the "these are the generations" looks forward to the events that follow, the "in the day" refers back to the Creation Week when the heavens and earth were made and filled. Thus, it appears that the day (*yom*) in 2:4 refers not to a 24-hour day but a longer period of time.

Regardless of the length of the Creation Days, this “day” is most definitely not a literal day. The full semantic range of *yom* is present in these opening verses of the Bible and careful exegesis will lead to the correct interpretation. So far it is clear that ordinary 24-hour days are not in view in the Creation account.

One other note about verse 4 is the usage of the term *yehwah elohim* (in most English Bibles translated as LORD God) as opposed to just *elohim*. The addition of *yehwah*, or more popularly rendered *Yahweh* has been the topic of much discussion. It was mentioned before that the masterpiece of all God’s Creation was man. That was clear from chapter 1. In chapter 2, we will see that this account is one that will add detail into the making of man. Another way to say it is that God is stepping even closer into His Creation and re-telling it in a more personal way. In this sense the addition of the Holy Name of *Yahweh* is entirely appropriate in that it shows the intimacy that God has always had with His most special creation.

Verses 5 and 6 are perhaps some of the most perplexing and misinterpreted of the opening chapters. Some questions that arise are...how does this go along with chapter 1? Is Creation Day 3 in mind here when it mentions the lack of vegetation? Does it contradict the order of chapter 1? Is the view global (earth) or local (land) in extent? Did it rain or not on the earth prior to the Flood? What is the nature and purpose of the “mist”? Some interpretations of these verses make this world out to be very different than the one we live in today; one we truly cannot comprehend. Is that true? I will attempt to make sense of the verses and help answer these questions.

As was the case in the first pericope, the first thing we need to do is look at the verbs to tell us its boundaries and genre and start us in the right direction in its interpretation. The first observation is that there are no *wayyiqtol* verbs in this passage. The first *wayyiqtol* verb we encounter is *wayyiytser* (And He formed) in verse 7. The verbs in verses 4-6 are in the imperfect, perfect, *weqetal* and infinitive. Remember the general rule that these verbs that come before a string of *wayyiqtol* verbs are used to provide background information pertinent to the storyline that follows. This fact is absolutely critical in understanding this second pericope. Verse 4 sets the stage for presenting the “generations of the heavens and the earth”, and verses 5 and 6 will tell us what the conditions were when the storyline picks up in verse 7.

At this time it seems appropriate to say that it is most unfortunate that the King James Version and many of its successors did not see this verbal relationship in this manner. Their translation of *erets* in these verses as “earth” has given rise to much of the confusion and apparent contradiction between this account and the one in 1:1-2:3. Many global-extent adherents say that verse 5 speaks of a time when no plant was yet on the earth, and there was no rain yet on the earth. Similarly, verse 6 says that the entire earth was watered by a mist that rose up from the earth. They say this refers to Day 3 before God created the land plants. The belief that it did not rain anywhere on earth means that the world was very different then than it is today. Some even read way more into the Scripture ideas like a vapor canopy in the atmosphere that held back the rain until the Flood and ideas that the entire earth was a perfect garden like Eden. We have seen and will see that those ideas are unfounded and even contradictory biblically and impossible scientifically. Needless to say, these ideas came from the long King James tradition of translating *erets* in a global manner. Subscribers to the global-extent view fail to see that God

Himself has narrowed the semantic range already in the first pericope of both *erets* and *shamayim* to “land” and “sky” respectively. In this regard, the English Standard Version has more appropriately translated these terms here in Genesis 2. Only in the local-extent interpretation with a proper understanding of the grammar will we walk away with an interpretation that does not contradict other Scripture and is scientifically sound.

If we just take these three verses out of context it is easy to get the picture that Day 3 of Creation is in view. There is apparently dry ground, and there are no plants yet. No rain has come because there were no plants to water. But grammatically this is impossible as this is background information on the conditions when verse 7 begins. Verse 7 speaks of God forming man out of the dust of the ground. This occurred on Day 6. If there were no plants anywhere on the earth when man was formed, then there is a contradiction with Chapter 1 where it says clearly that land plants predate man. You see then that with the global-extent view it is impossible to escape contradiction. If the Bible is inerrant (a view which I hold), then there must be another interpretation. And there is. The local-extent view says that there may have been no vegetation in the land where Adam was created while other parts of the planet could have had abundant plant growth. This is in line with Chapter 1.

Another strike against the global view is the term used for “bush of the field” (*siyach hassadeh*). If you recall the vegetation listed in Chapter 1, *siyach* is not mentioned. This means that the list in Chapter 1 is not comprehensive. The word *siyach* is mentioned four times in the OT. It can be considered a “bush” which is unlike the other vegetation listed earlier. However, the aforementioned low-lying plant/grass term *esev* is also mentioned here in verse 5. This *esev* probably does not include the *siyach* since it is mentioned separately.

In addition to the kinds of vegetation listed, there is the use of the adverb *terem* (yet, or not yet). The use of “yet” in the verse seems to indicate that the subject is expected to come around. It is hard to imagine another use. If we have eliminated the possibility of these verses referring to Day 3 by means of grammatical relationships, then it appears that they are pointing towards Day 6 and the forming of man (verse 7). If this is the case, since we know that land plants were brought forth completely on Day 3, the only explanation is a seasonal one in which certain vegetation is ephemeral. In this reading, this particular “land” had not “yet” seen the *siyach* or any *esev* because it was not “yet” their season.

This reason is given in part b of verse 5. “For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground”. Does this mean that there had been no rain anywhere on earth since its beginning? Not at all. If we go with the local-extent view which has so far not contradicted other Scripture like the global view, then we can limit *erets* here to “land” and not “earth”. There is no Scriptural indication that there has ever been an event in earth history that would have held back rain. The original Creation had all the components of the hydrologic cycle...oceans, air and rivers. It also had topography as we will see which would have helped the air currents carry the evaporated water to higher altitudes to make rain. Furthermore the rivers we will come in contact with later in the chapter are flowing which means they would need a continued source of water as to not run dry. This necessitates rain in the primordial Creation. Any other interpretation does not support other Scriptural observations and makes the early earth a mystical place where natural laws are optional. It appears that the

seasonal rains had not yet come to this “land” and there was no way of keeping the ephemeral vegetation from withering because there was no man to work the ground.

Next we see that a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground. The only natural way to irrigate this land without man seems to be this “mist” that watered the ground. Obviously it was not effective in keeping the vegetation around all year long because at this time there was none “yet in the land”. The nature of this “mist” (Heb. *ed*) is a mystery. This word is only used here and in Job 36:27. The LXX translates it differently in both instances; *pege* (spring) here and *nephele* (cloud) in Job. According to TWOT, *ed* could be derived from the Akkadian word *edu* which “refers to the annual inundation of Babylon by the Euphrates as well as to irrigation”. If that is indeed the derivation of *ed*, it would fit with the interpretation that the vegetation is short-lived and seasonal because of the ephemeral water source. The usage in Job also indicates a working hydrological cycle when it speaks of “the drops of water; they distill his mist (*ed*) in rain which the skies pour down and drop on mankind abundantly” (Job 36:27-28). While the word meaning is not very well understood, it seems clear it is part of the familiar hydrologic cycle which rules out the possibility biblically that there was no rain before the Flood.

The stage is now set in this “land” for the appearance of man. In some portion of land where the climate is such to produce ephemeral vegetation because rainfall is seasonal and a mist or irrigating flood is insufficient to produce year-round vegetation, God is about to form His masterpiece out of the “dust of the ground”. The land is in the dry season awaiting this cultivator who appears in verse 7.

God’s Garden:

Genesis 2:7-9 (ESV)

7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

We know that the verbs in verse 4-6 help tell us the background information for when the first *wayyiqtol* verb appears. That verb occurs in verse 7. The LORD God is at work in this verse (*wayyiytser yehwah elohim*: and the LORD God formed). We are told that the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. It should be very clear that this is a direct reference to chapter 1 verses 26-27 except more detail is given here. It should also now be very clear that we are in Creation Day 6. On this Day, *Yahweh elohim* formed *haadam* (the man) *aphar* (dust) *min haadamah* (from the ground). Notice the similarity of the Hebrew word for man (*adam*) and the word for ground (*adamah*). The proper name for the first man *adam* is nothing more than a transliteration of the word. In fact, the LXX transliterates the word *Adam* beginning in verse 16. Before that it uses *anthropos* (man) exclusively. The ESV waits until verse 20 when the man’s helper (Eve) is made to transliterate *Adam* into English. There should again be no mistaking the origin of

man. As his very name suggests, his body is part of the ground and not the product of evolutionary refinement.

This is the first occurrence of *yatsar* (to form). The emphasis here is on shaping something out of existing material. Notice it is not the man's body that is divinely created. As we saw in 1:27 it is his being made in the image of God that is the reason for the word *bara* (to create). This image we bear is the reason we are uniquely special amongst all created things. The body is merely sculpted dust.

God's next act after forming Adam's body from the dust was to breathe (*naphach*) into his nostrils (*aph*; LXX strangely translates as *prosopon* (face)) the breath (*neshamah*) of life (*chayyim*; LXX - *zoe*). With that, the man became a *nephesh chayyah*. So what exactly happened here? Moses writes in Leviticus 17:11 that the life (*nephesh*) of a creature is in its blood. When the animals of chapter 1 and man became *nephesh chayyah*, their bodies were filled with lifeblood. Keep in mind that we share this trait with the other creatures. It is not lifeblood that makes us special, it is the image in which we were created. This verse adds considerably more detail to 1:26-27.

The very first thing God did for Adam after giving him life was to give him a home and a job. Verse 8 begins with the *wayyiqtol* verb *nata* (to plant). The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. Two obvious observations have seemingly escaped the notice of most Bible interpreters and scholars over the centuries up until the present. First, God plants the Garden of Eden AFTER He creates Adam and before He makes Eve. Even in children's stories today, the originally created earth is made out to be a global paradise. That is not what the text says. Adam was created in a barren land with only ephemeral vegetation. Second, as just mentioned Adam was NOT created in the Garden of Eden. He was placed there after the garden was planted. These facts are crucial to putting together an accurate, not mythical, interpretation of earth history.

On the origin of the Garden of Eden it says that God planted the garden. The verb *nata* is used 55 times in the OT. When God is the subject sometimes it can be figurative as in Ex. 15:17 where God will "plant" Israel in the Promised Land. In other uses it speaks more of actual plants as in Ps. 104:16. Whether it is God "planting" the Garden or Noah "planting" a vineyard in Gen 9:20 or Abraham "planting" a tamarisk tree in Gen. 21:33, it appears that this is an actual process of planting either from a seed or from a youngling. This would mean that some time would have elapsed. This puts serious strain on the view that this Creation Day 6 lasted only 24 hours. Though it seems straightforward to think of these Days as similar to our own, the text speaks against that interpretation when looked at closely. As will hopefully become abundantly clear, there are simply too many events that happened on Day 6 for this to be an ordinary 24-hour day.

This garden (*gan*; LXX – *paradeisos* – from which we get the word paradise) was planted in Eden which is east of where the man was created. Before the LXX, the word *paradeisos* was a term generally used for "park". According to TDNT the word was borrowed from old Persian. The LXX usage of *paradeisos* moved it to more of a religious word used only for the "Garden of God" (see also Gen. 13:10; Is. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8-9). In the NT, the word has even higher theological intonations. Jesus tells the thief on the cross that he will join Him that day in

paradeisos (Luke 23:43). Paul has a vision in which we ascends to *paradeisos* (2Cor. 12:4). Finally, in Rev. 2:7, Jesus tells that church that those who overcome will eat of the tree of life which is *paradeisos*. The evolution of the word *paradeisos* would seem to indicate that the garden that God planted in Gen. 2:8 is far different than the one Jesus will show believers in the age to come. While we see some similarities, there can truly be no comparison to God's "heavenly" paradise. God's earthly paradise, however, was a real place on earth and was located to the east, in Eden.

The text says that God placed Adam in the garden in verse 8. A few verses later we will see that the reason for this is for him to take care of it. Verse 9, however, continues with the *wayyiqtol* verb *wayyatsemach* (and He caused to grow). The verb here is in the Hifil stem which gives emphasis to the means for the growth of the garden. Simply, God caused *kol ets* (every tree) that was pleasing to the sight and good for food to grow. Nothing is said about the *esev* (low-lying vegetation and grasses) or the *siyach* (bushes), so it may be reasonable to assume they were not present or perhaps they were there before God planted the trees. Nevertheless two specific trees are mentioned in verse 9; the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The nature of these two trees is debated, but I will maintain that these were two real trees that God planted in His garden in Eden.

The Bible never says that Adam ate from the tree of life, but after God's curse in chapter 3, God sends him out of the garden and stations Cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree lest he eat of its fruit and live forever (Gen. 3:22-24). This suggests it was a real tree and that God indeed endowed the fruit with life-giving powers. When Adam sinned he was sentenced to death and there was to be no way back to eternal life except through the promise he was given of redemption in Gen. 3:15. It is safe to say that this tree no longer exists on earth, but as the case with other things in Scripture, it was a model of the one in heaven. A tree of life will again be seen by all believers in Christ in heaven (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14).

The fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was strictly forbidden by God to be eaten upon penalty of death (Gen. 2:17). We will explore the meaning of this death a bit later. Adam and Eve succumbed to the temptation and ate the fruit and mankind was then in need of a redeemer to get back into a right relationship with God. Nothing more is said of this tree after Genesis 3, but the account leaves every indication that the tree was a literal tree with literal fruit.

The Rivers Around Eden:

Genesis 2:10-14 (ESV)

10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers.

11 The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12 And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there.

13 The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush.

14 And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

Moses takes a brief intermission to describe the local geography around the Garden of Eden. Verses 10-14 contain no *wayyiqtol* verbs so we can tell this section is parenthetical to the main storyline. This passage mentions the four rivers that flow into the garden; the *Piyshon* (LXX – *Phison*; English – Pishon), the *Giychon* (LXX – *Geon*; English – Gihon), the *Chiddeqel* (LXX – *Tigris*; English – Tigris), and the *Pherath* (LXX – *Euphrates*; English – Euphrates). Instantly we can recognize two of these four rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. Presently these two rivers are located in Iraq. They flow south from their headwaters in the highlands of Turkey and join together in Al Qurnah, Iraq (31.01N; 47.44E). From there they flow together approximately 114 miles and empty into the Persian Gulf. The other two rivers are not known today. Many reasons have been given, here are a few of them: 1.) The rivers were larger and presently are dried up, 2.) They were always ephemeral at best and now are dried up, 3.) The Jewish historian Josephus identifies them as the Ganges (Pishon) and the Nile (Gihon), and 4.) Their evidence has been wiped away by the global Noachian Flood. We will explore these and offer plausible interpretations below. It should be noted that even in this parenthetical passage there is a considerable amount of geologic data from which we can piece back together the world as it looked pre-Fall and pre-Flood.

As we explore what the passage says about the geography near Eden we notice that it says a river (singular) flowed out of Eden. From there it divided into four rivers (plural). This gives the impression that there was a single river running through Eden watering the entire garden and then it splits into four separate rivers downstream. Rivers do not typically separate downstream naturally, so could there be another interpretation, or is this how the natural world worked before the Fall and before the Flood? Though the English versions are usually rendered this way, it is unfortunate because the text can answer this dilemma quite well. As we saw in Genesis 1 there is a lot of exegetical insight that can be added when the perspective of the narrator is taken into account.

An often used English translation of *yatsa* in this instance is “flowed” (NASB, ESV, NIV, NLT). It is used over 1000 times in the OT and literally means to “go out” as in KJV and NKJV. Remember the geography lesson in 2:8 where it said that the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east. This implies that the garden is located within the greater area of Eden which was east of where God created Adam. Two scenarios are now before us when interpreting the second half of verse 10. We can either picture the course of the river as starting in Eden, flowing through the garden and then splitting into four rivers, or we can view this as four tributaries merging into one river in Eden and then flowing through the garden. It all comes down to the interpretation of the word “there”. Does “there” refer to Eden or the garden? The answer is in the final word in verse. In the Hebrew it is *rashiyth*. This word should be familiar by now as it is the first word in the Hebrew OT. In Gen. 1:1 it is translated as “the beginning”. In this verse it denotes the “beginnings” of the fluvial system. It is unfortunate that the NASB and ESV translate *rashiyth* as “rivers” whereas the KJV (heads), NKJV (riverheads) and NIV (headwaters) more accurately interpret the word in context. There is no reason to translate *rashiyth* as “rivers”. It clearly refers to the beginning of the river(s).

This answers our question of what “there” refers to. It must refer to Eden. The NIV gives the best interpretation of the verse although it is a bit awkward in reading. It accurately portrays the narrator looking upstream from the garden through Eden to the point at which the river divides

into four tributaries. The next four verses look even further upstream to the lands in which these four smaller tributaries course. The traditional interpretation of the river splitting into four smaller rivers downstream of the Garden of Eden not only helps present the pre-Fall world as a mythical place it does not fit the biblical data.

So as one travels upstream from Eden they encounter a point or points where four tributaries join the main river. The text says that the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The word Pishon is only mentioned once in the OT, but the land (*erets*) of Havilah is mentioned 7 times. Havilah is a son in the line of Ham (Gen. 10:7) who dispersed to an area in northern Africa after the Flood. Another Havilah is a man in Shem's lineage (Gen. 10:29) who settled near present-day Yemen. Yet another Havilah is mentioned in 1Sam 15:7 and may be located east of Sinai in NW Arabia. As mentioned above, Josephus thought the Pishon to be the Ganges which flows into Bangladesh some 2500 miles away from the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Perhaps a clue is given in the form of geology. The Pishon is said to flow around Havilah where there is gold. In this region, there are gold mines along the Red Sea in Egypt, Sudan and Eritrea to the west and Saudi Arabia and Yemen to the east. Gold also occurs in Saudi Arabia and Iran around the Persian Gulf and northern Iran and Turkey. It is safe to say that the exact location of the Pishon may never be known, although the text is clear that it must have once met up with the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers just upstream of Eden.

So, why does the Pishon not flow today? The most likely answer is because it eventually dried up because of the changing climate in the region over the millennia since the events of Genesis 2. It is fairly well documented that at the end of the last ice age about 10,000 years ago, this area was much wetter than it is today. Most YEC's would argue that the Flood of Noah destroyed any evidence of the antediluvian world, but the fact that the Tigris and Euphrates still exist precludes this interpretation. In fact, this is clear evidence that the Flood had little or no effect on the geology of this region. In addition, gold is thought to be formed either by hydrothermal fluids that precipitate the gold as the waters travel upward through fractures in a rock and cool, or by precipitation from magma that was injected into the surrounding cooler rock. Either way it is a secondary geologic process meaning that gold was not directly created by God in place, rather it was a result of geologic activity after the original formation of the earth. This is conclusive proof that geologic processes as we know them today were already underway before the Fall and the Flood. Furthermore, a map of the world's gold mines shows them to be placed mostly along mountain chains like the Rockies and Urals and other active geologic areas such as the East African Rift and Red Sea. The global-extent YEC view of the Flood would logically predict gold deposits to be randomly placed throughout the globe injected into pre-Flood rocks. This is not what is observed however. Additionally, gold deposits are seen in all time periods throughout the geologic column. Most of the gold in the Rockies-Andes mountain chain, the Alpine chain, the Middle East and in far eastern Asia is Cenozoic in age (0 to 65 million years ago). Most YEC geologists claim these are late-Flood or post-Flood aged rocks. Gold is clearly identified in Scripture here before the Flood and therefore, since it is a secondary geologic deposit, the host rock could not have been deposited by the Flood. These rocks **MUST** have been deposited before and not during or after the Flood, just as the Scripture says.

In addition to the gold we see two more geological items...*bedolach* and *shoham* (LXX: *anthrax* and *lithos prasinus* respectively). Quite often the English translators will differ on things like stones and the various types of plants and animals, but the translators are fairly consistent here; bdellium and onyx stone (although the NIV chooses aromatic resin for *bedolach*). According to Theophrastus (371-287 BC) who wrote probably the first geologic text book, *peri lithon* (On Stones), the substance *anthrax* was a red hexagonal mineral that did not burn. The descriptions he gave sound like it was a red garnet or possibly spinel (*peri lithon*: 18-19). English translations are unanimous in translating *shoham* as onyx.

The name of the second river was The Gihon (verse 13). It flowed around the whole land of Cush (LXX: *Aithopias*; English: Ethiopia). Some have argued that this “Cush” does not refer to the usual Ethiopia but rather the land of the Kassites, east of the Tigris River, based on the usage of the Hebrew *kush* for the Akkadian *kashshu* (Kassites). The latter makes more sense based on geography, but it is also possible that the river may be non-existent today as the word is mostly used to describe a spring in its remaining uses in the OT.

It should be noted that the details given for these rivers decreases from the first to the fourth. Perhaps this is on purpose as in the time of Moses (15th century BC), these first two rivers were not as familiar to the audience. Indeed they are unfamiliar to us today and these few verses are all we have to reconstruct their existence. Not so for the third and fourth rivers (Tigris and Euphrates). Their course is familiar to us today, and would have been familiar to an Israelite receiving this message in Moses’ day. There is no reason to assume that these two rivers are much different than they were in the days of Adam and Eve. Any theory to say that these rivers are different because of geologic change of a global Noachian Flood is special pleading and obviously not the simplest interpretation.

Adam’s Charge:

Genesis 2:15-17 (ESV)

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Although these verses begin with the *wayyiqtol* verb *wayyiqich* (and He took), this is a clear reference back to verse 8 where God placed the man in the garden. This is merely picking up the story from that point after the brief excurses regarding the rivers. Here the LORD God put (Heb. *nuach* in the Hiphil stem literally meaning “God deposited”) Adam in the Garden of Eden for two purposes; to work it and keep it. Remember from chapter 1:28 when God told Adam to “subdue” (Heb. *khavash*), He meant that nature would not want to be subdued. This working, or tilling, of the garden would not be an easy task. Likely it was made easier by the natural irrigation of the rivers and there must have been good fertile soil that permitted strong plant growth that kept out the thorns and thistles, but it would be work nonetheless. His second task was to “keep” (Heb. *shamar*) the garden. Literally this would be to guard it against anything that might keep it from producing bountiful crops. Ironically, upon Adam’s sin he was banished

from the garden and God stationed cherubim to guard (*shamar*) the entrance or “keep” the Garden from Adam (Gen. 3:24).

After giving Adam his job description God gives him a command saying, “You may surely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” The first part of this command gives the instruction (v. 16) and the second part the warning and punishment (v.17). Adam was told to eat of any tree (*ets*) except one. Presumably there is no reason to assume he could not eat of other kinds of vegetation not mentioned here (1:29-30) and even animals (see discussion above). The reason only the *ets* is mentioned here is likely the parallel between the good *ets* in verse 16 and the banned *ets* in verse 17.

In the ESV you will note that the English word “surely” appears in both of these verses. This may seem trivial but it is extremely vital in interpreting these verses, and there is disagreement among commentators. Almost all other versions do not translate both words as “surely” (they translate as “freely” (16), and “surely” (17)). Why does the ESV translate both as “surely”? Because they are similar grammatical constructions. The ESV has accurately conveyed the true intent of the construct known as the infinitive absolute. This is where a verb is used in the infinitive form and is directly followed by the same verb in the imperfect tense. The primary reason this is done is to show emphasis. The other versions do not get it wrong in the sense that Adam could freely eat of any tree, but they miss the emphatic point that Adam *surely* will eat of any tree. Also, it makes little sense in verse 17 to say that Adam will freely die if he eats of the forbidden tree.

The controversial aspect of this grammatical construct here is, “what is the effect on the verb ‘to die’ in verse 17?” Most YEC commentators will argue this construct can be used another way. The effect would be that the verse could suggest that upon disobeying Adam would begin a process of death. They say that the verse literally should be translated “dying, you shall die”, suggesting an ongoing process initiated on the “day” that he sinned. Why? Because the word *yom* (day) is used in verse 17 and we know that Adam did not physically die the day he ate the fruit. He lived another 900 or so years. Since they insist on a literal 24-hour interpretation of *yom* in chapter 1, they see no reason for the difference here and any different meaning for the word may threaten the meaning in the first chapter. The result, however, is a faulty translation and interpretation of the infinitive absolute. Remember *yom* can mean an indefinite period of time. That interpretation fits well with verse 17. In this case *yom* roughly equals 900 years. The author strictly wanted to get across the certainty of the death. Adam would *surely* die in the day he disobeyed and ate the fruit.

The infinitive absolute is used 79 times in the OT. Never should it be translated in the manner the YEC commentators suggest above. I offer a few reasons here; 1) “dying” is a participle and there are no participles in this construct, it is an infinitive (to die); 2) By this reasoning verse 16 could be translated “eating, you shall eat” suggesting a gradual process of eating fruit and this is clearly nonsense; 3) in 1Kings 2:37 Solomon issues a similar warning to Shimei saying “on the day...you shall surely die” and when Shimei disobeyed it was not until 3 years later that Solomon had him killed. The use of the construct here was for Shimei to “know for certain” that he would *surely* die. His death was instant, it did not initiate when he disobeyed and gradually

take place over three years. For Shimei, *yom* equaled three years. Therefore since the biblical and logical evidence point against interpreting this with the participle “dying, you shall die”, we should interpret it the same as the others by concluding that it is to add emphasis and certainty that the punishment will *surely* happen. And it did happen in the same *yom* as the sin.

With that said it may be helpful in clarifying exactly what “death” would occur if Adam should disobey. The word *muth* almost always speaks of a physical death. Some argue that it is strictly physical, some say it is only a spiritual death (i.e. one that needs healing in the eventual resurrection of Christ) and still others say it is a combination. The Bible is clear that we are separated from God by our sin and are thus spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-5), but the context and the eventual curse given upon his disobedience in Gen. 3:19 suggest that it is at least primarily physical in nature. This is also supported in the NT (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; 8:10). This being so, one could justifiably argue that it would be no warning to Adam at all to tell him he would physically die, if there was no death around him. In other words Adam must have witnessed animal death if he were to truly understand God’s command and warning in verses 16-17. As we have seen before, the only reason given for the “no animal death before the Fall” stance is not a sound biblical one. It comes from the faulty global-extent view of the words “very good” in Genesis 1:31. No verse in the Bible speaks of animal death being a result of Adam’s sin.

Adam and Eve:

Genesis 2:18-25 (ESV)

18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”

19 Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.

20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him.

21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

These last few verses of chapter 2 mention the creation of the woman Eve. We know she is indirectly referenced in 1:27 (female) so therefore this second account in 2:4-25 MUST all take place on Day 6 of the Creation Week. This is extremely important to understand and the implications are that Day 6, as we will see, could not possibly only be 24 hours in duration.

As the account continues with the *wayyiqtol* verb so familiar from chapter 1, *wayyomer*, it is interesting to note that the first words out of the Creator’s mouth are “It is NOT good...” This reference to something “not good” is also a clear indicator that these events come before His

proclamation that everything is “very good” in 1:31. Something “not good” had to be fixed before He would rest on Day 7. As if our being made in His image wasn’t enough; as if His breathing into our nostrils the breath of life wasn’t enough; as if giving us dominion over all Creation wasn’t enough, He decided it was “not good” for us to be lonely. He would make a helper fit for Adam (literally a counterpart like him).

As we saw above the *wayyiqtol* can refer to an event that is not in chronological order if it is obvious that it does not do so. In verse 19 the verb *wayyitser* (and He formed) is clearly a reference to an event that predates Adam. The beasts (Day 6) and the birds (Day 5) were formed from the earth and brought before Adam to receive their names. It appears fairly obvious that this is not a complete list of animals that came but merely a partial list representing all *nephesh chayyah* (v. 19; cf v. 20). Therefore it is highly doubtful that Adam could have named all the animals in just one 24-hour period. After naming all the created *nephesh chayyah* Adam could not find a counterpart like him.

God then causes Adam to go into a deep sleep (Heb. *tardemah*). This word is used 7 times in the OT and always speaks of a divinely caused deep sleep. While in the deep sleep, God took a rib (literally the side) of Adam and made the woman (vv. 21-22). When he woke from the sleep he exclaimed “at last!” He had finally found a counterpart after looking at all the beasts of the field and the birds. At last, man’s condition of loneliness was made “good”. Adam called her “Woman” and it would appear from the usage of verse 24 in the NT (Matt 19:5; Eph. 5:31), that the two were married in the sight of God and were unashamed at their nakedness.

As we have seen, the two Creation accounts do not contradict, but rather the second fits nicely inside Creation Day 6 (Gen. 1:24-31). Since that is the case it seems good now to consider the events of Day 6 in order to see just how unlikely their occurrence within 24 hours of time:

- 1.) God makes the land-dwelling *nephesh chayyah* from the ground such as livestock, reptiles and wild beasts (Gen. 1:24-25; 2:19)
- 2.) In a land west of Eden that was experiencing its dry season (Gen. 2:5-6), God makes man in His own image and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life (Gen. 1:26-27a; 2:7)
- 3.) God plants a garden to the east in Eden where four rivers come together and places Adam there to take care of it (Gen. 2:8, 10-15)
- 4.) God warns Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17)
- 5.) God realizes it is not good for man to be alone so he brings all of the land-dwelling *nephesh chayyah* and all the birds to Adam so he can name them (Gen. 2:18-20)
- 6.) God causes Adam to fall into a deep sleep and from his side, He creates a woman, Eve (Gen. 1:27b; 2:21-25)
- 7.) God blesses Adam and Eve and tells them to multiply and to take dominion over the creatures of the earth (Gen. 1:28-30)
- 8.) God declares His Creation “very good” thus pronouncing its completion (Gen. 1:31)

Admittedly some of these events could have been near-instantaneous, but it is clear that some would take an extended period of time (at least longer than 24 hours). The climatic cycles of

event number 2, the planting of the garden (number 4), and the naming of the animals seem to have taken at least a year and most likely taken several or more. Since soil is eroded bedrock it cannot be a created thing, and it could not have been ready for God to plant the garden just three days after the first mention of bedrock in Day 3. It stands then that Day 6 started quite a bit after Day 3 to allow for erosion in addition to the time allotted for the plants in the garden to grow. A reasonable minimum duration for Day 6 is at least a few decades based on the text alone. If we allow the geologic record to assist in the timing, it is likely that Day 6 lasted over 300 million years (from the first appearance of land-dwelling reptiles in the Devonian Period).

Scriptural Observations on the Pre-Fall Natural World from Genesis 1-2:

There has been a widespread belief in the history of Christianity that persists even today that the original Creation was perfect containing no natural evils (i.e. tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, volcanoes, etc...). This perfection was lost when God cursed the earth and all Creation as a result of Adam's sin in Genesis 3. Throughout this commentary, I have shown observations from the biblical text that seem to contradict that hypothesis. In this section I will summarize these observations to hopefully show the overwhelming evidence that the original created heavens and earth are virtually identical to the ones today, and the processes evident then are still ongoing today. In my research, I have found very little attention has been paid to the clues the Creator left in His Word regarding the physical nature of His Creation. This oversight has helped propagate the notion of "original perfection". In my opinion this has led to a dividing wall between Christians who hold this belief and the majority of the unchurched, thus creating a poor witness. I will discuss more about the biblical narrative of the Fall and Curse on another page, but what is relevant here are the abundant observations of the pre-Curse natural world.

Observations in the heavens:

- The expanse (sky or atmosphere) went through a process to become "very good". It was not created as such (1:8-13; 31).
- The expanse had roughly the same chemical composition as it does today by Day 4 to allow the visible light from the heavenly bodies (1:14-15)
- Day 4 lasted a minimum of 10,000 years based on the starlight we receive. The nearest star Proxima Centauri is 4.24 light years away. All of the stars we see with the naked eye are relatively close within the Milky Way Galaxy. In fact, the furthest star we can see unaided is roughly 10,000 light-years away. In order for God to declare them good (1:18), the stars had to fulfill their purpose of lighting the earth and helping aid in telling signs and seasons (1:14-15). According to Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$ and the spectral lines we see from incoming starlight, the speed of light has remained constant and it was not simply created "in transit". Therefore the minimum duration of Day 4 must be the minimum time for all visible starlight to reach the earth-based observer.
- In order to give light to the earth (1:14-15), stars including the sun were undergoing thermonuclear fusion of hydrogen. This proves the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics was in place before the Curse.

Observations on the earth:

- The earth is rotating to produce a day and night (1:4-5). This rotation produces a coriolis effect which is responsible for the wind patterns we see on earth. When

the first land appeared (1:9), there would have been differing pressure cells creating a spiraled wind flow towards areas of lower pressure. These are cyclones, hurricanes, even water spouts etc... All of these so-called “natural evils” would have been present before the Fall.

- God made dry land appear in 1:9. This was the formation of one of the supercontinents in the early earth’s history as interpreted from the “gathering together” of the waters. This was clearly a tectonic event, proving crustal plates were in motion before the Fall. Along with plate tectonics comes events such as earthquakes, volcanoes and changes in ocean and wind currents that effect climate.
- Since God commanded the earth sprout vegetation (1:11), there must have been a fertile soil. Since soil is formed from weathered bedrock, it cannot be an instantly created thing, it must have taken time to form. This is because God cannot show any deception and that is what it would be if the soil gave a false history of coming from parent material. The general rule of thumb is one inch of soil takes 1,000 years to form. Based on these data, Creation Day 3 must have spanned at least a few thousand years.
- Man is told by God to subdue (*khavash*) the earth in 1:28. Again he is told to cultivate and keep (*shamar*) the land in 2:15. Both of these terms suggest that the earth would fight back in a sense and not want to be subdued and kept. Literally it will try to take over and run its course unless man steps in. This paints a different picture than the supposed perfect pre-Fall state in some interpretations.
- God gave humans and animals food in 1:29-30 which suggests the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics was already underway in the form of digestion and therefore not instituted at the Curse.
- If there was mist (2:5) and waters above the expanse (1:6-7) and there was light (1:3; 14-15), then there were rainbows before the mention of God’s covenant after the Flood (9:12-13). It was therefore not a new creation in Noah’s time.
- Adam’s body was formed from the “dust” of the earth (2:7). This term literally means dirt or loose earth. It is therefore a byproduct of erosion of pre-existing bedrock. God may have instantaneously fashioned the body of Adam, but according to the text He used material that would have taken time to form; likely a few thousand years at a minimum.
- God planted a garden in Eden in 2:8 and caused the vegetation to grow in 2:9. Among other things this involved soil and time. The text does not envision an instantaneous miraculous appearing of a full lush garden straight from the bedrock. Rather it utilizes terms the reader would understand describing the natural process of growing vegetation. Again, since soil is a product of erosion it cannot be an instantly created thing. It likely involved thousands of years at a minimum. The planting of the garden would have taken an additional few decades.
- A river flowed out of Eden (2:10). A river flows because of gravity pulling it down slope. This means there was topography in the land of Eden. Topography is not a created thing. Rather it is formed by plate tectonics and erosion. For the most part sedimentary rocks were originally laid down flat. Any sedimentary rocks that we see today that aren’t flat have undergone some tectonic movement.

Igneous rocks may not form in an originally flat position but they are a product of tectonics as well (i.e. stretched and thinned crust, intrusions, volcanism, etc...). This flowing river proves plate tectonics were in effect before the Curse.

- For the river in 2:10 to keep flowing, it would have needed to be recharged as to not run dry. This means there was an active hydrologic cycle. This proves there was rain before the Flood.
- The four tributaries that meet up in Eden to form the main river that watered the garden (2:10) all started in separate highlands. Again, this scenario invokes a tectonic history for the region. As a matter of fact, the geography mentioned here portrays very closely the present-day Mesopotamian region.
- Gold, bdellium and onyx are said to be in the region of Havilah (2:11-12). Gold is formed by secondary geologic processes and is therefore not an originally created thing. Its existence proves there were fractures in the bedrock for hydrothermal fluids to migrate through. The text makes it clear that these geologic processes were quite active before the Curse and the Flood.

These are a few of the observations that can be made concerning the pre-Cursed natural world. I hope you agree that the text does not paint a picture of a world shrouded in mystery but rather a world that functioned exactly the way it does today. There appears to be absolutely no biblical reason to conclude that (sometimes detrimental) geologic processes such as earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis as well as hurricanes, heavy rain, fire and other climatic changes are a result of Adam's sin through God's Curse.

Summary of Creation Accounts (Genesis 1 and 2):

The purpose of this commentary was to hopefully provide a helpful interpretation of a text that is overall very poorly understood. Unfortunately it has been much studied but there have been very few publications that go into sound detailed exegesis with an emphasis on biblical inerrancy while incorporating sound scientific observations. My hope was to be as faithful to the biblical text as possible presenting things as a 15th century BC Israelite would have understood them and relate them to our latest scientific findings. Through my study I am convinced that not only does the Bible back up the latest scientific research, but more importantly all of the scientific research has consistently proved the biblical accounts to be truthful. This could only happen if both the Bible and nature were authored by the same infinitely wise Creator God.

Both Creation accounts are fully compatible, not contradicting each other even once. Genesis 1 outlines the entire creation of the universe such that there was a beginning (Genesis 1:1-2) followed by 6 "Days" of creative activity given more or less sequentially as demanded by grammatical rules by an author with a perspective from somewhere on earth. Genesis 2:4-25 nicely fits into Creation Day 6 adding much more detail than its counterpart in chapter 1. Genesis 2:1-3 then tells the story of God's continuing rest from His creative work.

I have also tried to be faithful in representing the numerous different interpretations of specific passages and critiquing them both biblically and scientifically. It appears that many hold to the interpretations passed down by the church fathers that the heavens and earth were created in six literal 24-hour days. Such is the position of those who I refer to as global-extent Young Earth Creationists. Global in extent meaning they believe that all of Creation is mentioned in Genesis

1 and the word *erets* refers to the earth as a globe and not to the more “local” meaning of “land”. I have admitted that this is the most logical interpretation of the texts based on a casual reading in an English translation like the King James Version. That being said, we have seen that that interpretation completely falls apart based on a detailed study of the biblical text itself in its original language. This idea is further damaged by scientific data which consistently contradict the notion that the universe is only 6,000 years old.

The best way to interpret Genesis 1 and 2 is to just let the Hebrew text speak for itself. When it is allowed to do so, we have noted that there is no reason to stick to a 24-hour interpretation of *yom* (day). There is no reason (in fact it is unbiblical) to consider *erets* as the global earth after Genesis 1:10. There is no reason to come to certain conclusions such as, there were days and nights before the sun was created; the sun was made after light; it never rained before the Flood; the words “very good” mean the world was perfect containing no disease, storms, earthquakes or volcanoes; the pre-Fall world contained no geologic processes familiar to us today; the whole earth was like a perfect garden before Adam sinned; there was no animal death before the Fall so therefore no fossils. Such conclusions are mandatory when adhering to the global extent YEC interpretation of these passages. This position unfortunately forces one into a corner when trying to explain scientific observations that call this view into question. A few examples of this are 1.) if there was no sun on Days 1-3, how did the earth rotate and what light source did it rotate around? 2.) If there were no earthquakes or volcanoes or rain, how did the rivers in Eden flow and how did they get recharged? 3.) how could fruit flies not have taken over the globe if there was no animal death before the Fall, and so on. It is easy to see that this interpretation necessitates the early earth be a mythical fairy tale place where few of the physical laws we live by today applied. This is unbiblical, unscientific and unnecessary. As it turns out there is a better interpretation of the Hebrew text that makes the early earth out to be exactly the same as we know it today.

These accounts, while not meant to serve as a scientific textbook, nicely framework all of our latest findings because of their truths. Einstein’s theory of relativity predicted a beginning of the universe; something that went against the grain in the scientific community. Indeed it was something Einstein himself did not want to believe. Later on a force called dark energy was discovered that proved that the universe was expanding and doing so more and more rapidly. This proved the universe was not always in existence. It proved it had a beginning. It proved something Christians had believed for 2000 years; that in the beginning the heavens and the earth were created *ex nihilo*. Though it may be true that some scientists still search for an explanation for the creation of the universe apart from God, none has of yet been found. The simplest explanation is to take Genesis 1:1 at face value.

I hope this commentary has been beneficial to you as you seek answers as to the meaning of the first chapters of Genesis and if and how they relate to scientific research. The Bible is clear: God created everything that exists. God created the world and all its inhabitants; a world not filled with myth and fantasy but a real world with the same natural processes we experience today. Lastly, He created human beings in His image. It is an image we bear to this day. Sadly Adam ruined the perfect fellowship he had with his Creator in the garden when he sinned in chapter 3. He was sentenced to death (Gen. 2:17; 3:19) but he was not cast out without a life preserver (Gen. 3:15). Like Adam we have all sinned and have fallen short of God’s standards (Rom.

3:23) and have death sentences on our heads (Rom. 6:23; 1Cor. 15:21-22). The good news is that this savior, Jesus Christ, is also given to us to restore our broken relationship with Him. If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us (1John 1:9). If we confess Him as lord we are saved (Rom. 10:9). There isn't anything we can do on our own to be saved, it is a gift given purely by God's grace (Eph. 2:8-9). God doesn't want our broken relationships to go on any further. He wants us to come to Him now (2Pet. 3:9). While God is yet resting in the 7th Day of Creation, there is still time to join Him (Heb. 4:9-11).

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