
Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony

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To rebut the literalist interpretation of the Genesis creation week propounded by the young-earth theorists is a central concern of this article. At the same time, the exegetical evidence adduced also refutes the harmonistic day-age view. The conclusion is that as far as the time frame is concerned, with respect to both the duration and sequence of events, the scientist is left free of biblical constraints in hypothesizing about cosmic origins.

The opening section gives a biblico-theological sketch of the two-register nature of cosmology as presented in Scripture. The second major section shows how two-register cosmology informs and shapes the treatment of both the space and time dimensions in the Genesis prologue. It is found that a metaphorical relationship exists between the two levels; the heavenly level (upper register) is described in figures drawn from the earthly level (lower register). As for the seven-day scheme, it belongs to the upper register and is, therefore, to be understood figuratively, not literally. The point of the concluding section is that [Genesis 1](#), on any view that identifies the narrative order with the temporal sequence, would contradict the teaching of [Gen. 2:5](#) concerning the natural mode of providence during the creation process.

An apologia is needed for addressing again the question of the chronological data in the Genesis creation account. Simply put -- the editor made me do it. Over thirty years ago, I made an exegetical case for a non-literal interpretation of the chronological framework.¹ In the interval, that approach has found increasing acceptance. Its most distinctive

argument, derived from [Gen. 2:5](#), has occasionally been incorporated in studies with similar views of the chronological issue.² Advocacy of the literalist tradition, however, is as clamant as ever, and it was thought that a more accessible statement of my exegetical arguments could prove useful now.

In preparing the restatement another line of exegetical evidence has come to the fore in my thinking. It concerns a two-register cosmological concept that structures the whole biblical cosmogony. This idea developed into the main point and has become the umbrella under which the other, restated arguments are accorded an ancillary place here and there. My apologia concludes then with a claim of adding something somewhat fresh to the old debate.

Two-Register Cosmology

Central in biblical revelation is the relationship of God, whose dwelling place is heaven's glory ([Ps. 115:16](#)), to man on earth. A two-register cosmos is thus the scene of the biblical drama, which features constant interaction between the upper and lower registers.³

From the perspective of man (more precisely, of man in his pre-Consummation state), the heavenly register is an invisible realm. However, heaven is not to be thought of as occupying a separate place off at a distance from the earth or even outside the cosmos. Heaven and earth relate to each other spatially more after the manner of speculated dark matter and visible matter. When earthlings experience a proleptic opening of their eyes, they see that the very spot where they are is the gate of heaven ([Gen. 28:16, 17](#)), filled with heavenly chariots of fire ([2 Kgs. 6:17](#)).

Reference to the invisible realm as "above is simply a spatial figure based on a natural analogy between what is physically higher and what is more exalted in dignity and honor. This same analogy accounts for the designating of the invisible sphere by the name of the upper level within the visible world. Visible space is itself divided into heaven and earth (and, in tripartite formulations, the waters under the earth). The visible heaven consists of the star-studded canopy of the sky overhead, with the clouds, the waters that are above the earth. Taking its name from this above-section of visible space, supernal space (the above-section of the two-register cosmos) is then called "heaven."⁴ Further, when the heavenly Glory is revealed in visible theophany, it is a manifestation in clouds and related phenomena. So close is the association of God's dwelling and actions with the visible heaven (cf., e.g., [Ps. 104:2-4](#)) that it may be difficult to determine in given cases whether "heaven refers to the visible or invisible heaven, or both at once."⁵

The two-register character of biblical cosmology, relative as it is to man's preglorification status, is not permanent. It belongs only to the first stage of an eschatological movement that was integral to creation from the beginning and leads to a final stage of Consummation. As we trace this eschatological development, an important feature that emerges is the archetype-replica (original-likeness) relationship between the upper and

lower registers.

From the beginning, God's presence was peculiarly and preeminently associated with the invisible heaven. That was where he dwelt, the site of his enthronement (cf., e.g., [Deut. 26:15](#); [1 Kgs. 8:39, 43, 49](#); [Pss. 11:4](#); [102:20 \[19\]](#); [103:19](#); Isa. 66:1; Matt. 5:45; 7:21). It was there that he manifested his Glory to the angels, the Glory that fills invisible space and makes it a temple, the Glory-epiphany that is itself God's temple. But though the invisible, upper register heaven was God's true sanctuary, the earth also was at the first the scene of a special visible divine presence.⁶ Invisible space was the holy of holies; and visible space (visible heaven and earth) was a holy place. Creation was sanctified in all its spatial dimensions, with lower register space a replica of the upper register archetypal temple.

Eden was the sacred center of the earthly reproduction of the heavenly reality. Here in the garden of the Lord, the Spirit-Glory that fills the heavenly temple was visibly manifested on the mountain of God (cf. Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13 ff.; 31:8f.), the vertical cosmic axis linking heaven and earth. The revealed presence of the King of Glory crowning this sacred mountain marked the earth as a holy theocratic domain. Reflecting the identity of Eden as a sanctuary was the priestly responsibility assigned to man to guard the garden from profanation (Gen. 3:15). The sequel underscores this. When man forfeited his priestly role, guardianship of the holy site was transferred to the cherubim (Gen. 3:24). They were guardians of the heavenly temple throne and the extension of that function to Eden accents the identity of this earthly spot as a visible reproduction of the temple above.⁷

Man's fall radically affected the way the replication of holy heaven on earth was to unfold. As a consequence of the breaking of the creation covenant, the Glory-theophany was presently withdrawn and the earth, though still under the sovereign control of the King of heaven, was left an unsanctified place. Only by way of redemptive intrusion does theophany-centered holy place reappear in the otherwise non-holy, post-Fall world -- most prominently in the history of Israel.

Where sanctuary does emerge again on earth, its nature as a copy of the heavenly archetype is emphasized. The tabernacle and temple, restorations of Eden's sanctuary with a cherubim-guarded throne of God, are made after the pattern of the upper register temple revealed to Moses and Solomon.⁸ They point ahead typologically to the apocalypse of the heavenly temple at the end of the ages. At that consummation of redemptive history, prefigured by the Sabbath ordinance, the visible-invisible differentiation of space comes to an end as the heavenly Glory is unveiled to the eyes of redeemed earthlings, their perceptive capabilities transformed now by glorification. The boundary of heaven and earth disappears. All becomes one cosmic holy of holies. God's own Glory constitutes this final temple, the realization of the hope symbolized by its earthly replicas.

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Redemption is a way of achieving the original telos of creation despite the Fall. A successful probation by the first Adam would have led through a cosmologically two-register history to an eschatological climax at which Eden's Glory would have been absorbed into the surpassing heavenly Glory. At the dawning of the eternal Sabbath for humanity, all space, without distinction any longer of upper and lower cosmological levels, would have become a consummate revelation of the Glory of heaven's King. Because of the Fall, that eschatological omega-point had to be won by the second Adam.

Two-register cosmologies left their imprint on the form of ancient graphic and literary materials in a variety of ways. A quite literal case of the two-register format is seen in graphic representations like the Assyrian reliefs that picture the king in a lower register, whether driving forward in battle or returning triumphantly, and in a higher register the god in a matching stance.⁹ The Book of Job offers a clear instance of the shaping of a piece of literature by the two-layer cosmology. In the prologue, heavenly scenes (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6) alternate with closely related earthly scenes (Job 1:1-5, 13-22; 2:7-10). A similar movement from the upper to the lower register is found throughout the Book of Revelation. Each series of visions of happenings on earth is introduced by a disclosure of the heavenly control center of the universe, where the earthly judgments are decreed and from where their executive agents descend. With its characteristic opening of the heavens, the apocalyptic genre is a place we naturally expect to find the formative impact of two-register cosmology on literature. Another such place is a cosmogony like the Genesis prologue.

Cosmology of the Genesis Prologue

The creation prologue (Gen. 1:1-2:3) presents a theological mapping of the cosmos with space and time coordinates. Both these dimensions exhibit the biblical two-register cosmology, a construct that functions as an infrastructure of the entire account. And this, we discover, has a decisive bearing on the interpretation of the chronological data.

The Space Coordinate

Two-Register Space

Genesis 1:1. What this opening verse states is that God, in the beginning,¹⁰ created both the upper and lower spatial spheres. "The heavens and the earth is not just a merismus, a pair of antonyms which as a set signifies totality. The phrase rather denotes concretely the actual two components that together comprise all of creation. That does indeed amount to everything, but in translating, the separate, specific identity of each of these

two components must be preserved. One thing demanding this is that verse 2, resuming "the earth of verse 1, treats it by itself as a distinct, individual sphere.¹¹

More precisely, what Gen. 1:1 affirms is that God created not just the spatial dimensions immediately accessible to man, but the heavens too, that is, the invisible realm of the divine Glory and angelic beings. This interpretation is reflected in the apostle Paul's christological exposition of Gen. 1:1, declaring that the Son created "all things that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers (Col. 1:16; cf. John 1:1-3). Similarly Nehemiah, reflecting on the Genesis creation account, finds a reference there to the invisible heaven of the angels (Neh. 9:6), and the only possible referent is "the heavens of Gen. 1:1 (and the reference to that in Gen. 2:1, if the latter summation does in fact include Gen. 1:1, not just 1:2-31).¹²

Moreover, in the context of Genesis 1 itself, the visible "heaven or "firmament (v. 8) is derived from what is called "earth in verses 1 and 2. Hence, the "heavens that are distinguished from that "earth in verse 1 must be the invisible heavens. This would not necessarily be the case if verse 1 were a summary heading for the entire account. But what Gen. 1:1 says about "the beginning cannot be summing up the entire process of creation, for the allusions to the bere^oit of Gen. 1:1 in Prov. 8:22, 23 identify that "beginning as prior to (not coextensive with) the developments traced in Gen. 1:2ff. Though it is an independent statement, Gen. 1:1 is, therefore, not a heading but a declaration concerning the initial phase of creation history.

Some oppose construing Gen. 1:1-2 as I have because, they insist, the phrase "the heavens and the earth always signifies the finished product, the well-ordered, occupied universe, and hence "the earth that appears in that phrase in verse 1 cannot be the unfinished, uninhabitable place called "earth in verse 2.¹³ But contrary to this often repeated claim, in other appearances of the phrase "(the) heavens and (the) earth in Scripture, the idea that these realms were finished and inhabited is not what is signified by this phrase itself but would have to be supplied by the context. Even if all references after Gen. 1:1 happened to be to a heaven and earth in such a finished state, that would not be determinative for the Gen. 1:1 context, which deals with the very process of developing the product from an empty to a furnished condition.¹⁴ In fact, it may well be that in all the appearances of "(the) heavens and (the) earth (over half of which are allusions to the creation account, acknowledging the Lord as the maker of heaven and earth), the phrase signifies precisely the invisible and the visible realms, and thus the whole two-register world.

There is, therefore, no reason to resist the clear direction of Prov. 8:22-23 for the interpretation of Gen. 1:1 as referring to an earlier juncture, not to a later stage when the earth had become habitable for man. In point of fact, though the visible realm, the "earth, was not completed until the end of the creation "week, completion of the invisible heavenly realm (with its angelic hosts) had evidently been accomplished "in the beginning. Job 38:7 indicates that the celestial sons of God existed at the point in earth's development described in Gen. 1:2ff. Thus, in view of the close allusive relationship of Job 38 to Gen. 1, Job 38:7 also furnishes independent support for the

interpretation of "the heavens in Gen. 1:1 as the invisible sphere of the angels of God.

Gen. 1:1, therefore, states -- and how eminently fitting is this affirmation for the opening of the canonical Scriptures " that God in the beginning made the whole world, both its upper and lower spatial registers, both its invisible and visible dimensions, heaven and earth, all.

Genesis 1:2. Both invisible and visible space, introduced in Gen. 1:1 as "the heavens and "the earth respectively, appear again in verse 2. Focusing on the lower register, this verse describes the earth at an early inchoate stage (v. 2a and b). But it also prepares for the following account of how this uninhabitable world was transformed into a paradisiacal home for man by pointing to the God of the invisible heaven, present above the darkness-enshrouded waters of the earth below (v. 2c). This creative Spirit-Presence is depicted in avian metaphor¹⁵ as hovering in fostering fashion above the world. As shown (for one thing) by the striking echo of Gen. 1:2 in Deut. 32:10, 11, the "Spirit here refers to that heavenly epiphany which is known in its manifestation within the visible world as the Shekinah, the theophanic cloud of glory.¹⁶ Including as it does then the Spirit-Glory of the temple in heaven along with the earth below, Gen. 1:2 carries forward the two-register cosmology contained in verse 1.

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Genesis 1:3-2:3. The several creative fiats by which visible space gets fashioned into a habitable world in the course of the six days (Gen. 1:3ff.) are sovereign decrees. They clearly evoke the throne of the King of Glory, the King invisible, the only God, dwelling in light unapproachable (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). Each such fiat, therefore, signals the continuing presence of the upper register sphere in the panoramic scenario of the creation narrative. That these fiats emanate from the invisible heavens is indicated with particular clarity in the account of man's creation in God's image. For there (Gen. 1:26) the divine fiat takes the consultative "let us form that reveals the setting to be the angelic council,¹⁷ the judicial assembly which is a regular feature in disclosures of the heavenly reality denoted "Spirit" in Gen. 1:2.

Another index of the continued inclusion of the heavenly register in the scene is the motif of the divine surveillance and judgment found in the refrain: "and God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). For repeatedly conjoined with statements that the invisible heaven is the site of God's temple-throne is the declaration that from there he engages in a judicial scrutiny of the world. From that throne "his eyes behold, his pupils try the sons of men (Ps. 11:4c). It was from his throne in heaven that the divine Builder looked down, saw the unfolding work of his hands,

and pronounced it "good, that is, in perfect accord with his master plan (cf. Prov. 8:30, 31).

Further, the full two-register cosmology comes to expression in the fiat-fulfillment format, which is the basic structure of each of the six day-stanzas. While the "let there be" is uttered at the upper register, the "and it was so" occurs at the lower register. The fiat of the Logos-Word above is executed by the Spirit in the earth below.¹⁸

Again, and quite directly, God's throne in the upper section of the two-register cosmos is alluded to in statements about the Creator's seventh day rest, which is his heavenly enthronement (Gen. 2:2b, 3b). The earthly register is also included in the day seven section, for along with the Creator's Sabbath of royal resting above, it also contains the appointment of the Sabbath ordinance for human observance on earth below (Gen. 2:3).¹⁹

Table 1				
Two-register Space in Genesis Prologue				
	Verse 1	Verse 2	Days 1-6	Day 7
Upper Register	heaven	Spirit	fiats	God's Sabbath
Lower Register	earth	deep	fulfillments	Sabbath Ordinance

The summary chart of the space dimension theme in the Genesis prologue (Table 1) shows that two-register cosmology is present not only as a concept but as a pervasive factor in the organization of the composition. Additional evidence of its influence on the literary structure of the passage will be noted below.

Replication Relationship of the Two Registers

The lower register relates to the upper as replica to archetype. Before seeing how that comes to expression in the creation account, we must call attention to how the six days fall naturally into two triads, one dealing with creation kingdoms and the other with the creature kings given dominion over them. As frequently noticed, the two triads run in parallel with obvious correlation of their successive members.²⁰

The earthly products of the first three days mirror one or another characteristic of the invisible heaven, the above realm, the realm of light and overarching Glory (Gen. 1:2). The day-light called forth on day one was a replica of that Glory-light. The bright firmament-vault of day two was so much the likeness of its archetype that they shared the same name, "heaven (Gen. 1:8). The lofty trees, the climactic fruit of day three, are used in Scripture as an apt figure for the cosmos (cf. Dan. 4:10-12). With their high spreading branches a realm for the birds of

the heaven, they are comparable to the firmament-heaven in which the birds fly (Gen. 1:20), a towering image pointing to the overarching Spirit-heaven above.

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Moving on from copies of the heavenly kingdom to images of the heavenly King, the second triad of days presents creature kings whose roles in the hierarchy of creation are earthly reflections of the royal rule of the Creator enthroned above. Royal terminology is explicitly used for the luminaries of day four. In that they regulate the cycle of light and darkness, they are said to "rule over the kingdom of day and night produced on day one (Gen. 1:16; cf. Ps. 136:8, 9). God's blessing-mandate to the creatures of day five closely resembles the dominion mandate afterwards given to man. In each case royal occupation of the assigned domain is to be accomplished by being fruitful, multiplying, and filling (Gen. 1:22, 28). So the birds and fish would exercise their rule over the sky and sea, the kingdom realms of day two. Incidentally, the birds of day five and the luminaries of day four " both associated with the "firmament of heaven (Gen. 1:14, 15, 17, 20) " are like the King of heaven in other ways besides their ruling function. The birds' overshadowing of their nests (Deut. 32:11) and the luminosity of the sun and moon become biblical figures for the Glory-Spirit as a protective covering, the heavenly Sun and Shield (cf. Ps. 84:12 [11]).²¹ Culminating the series of earthly replicas of the Creator-King is the final creature of day six, man, the image of God and his holy angels (Gen. 1:26). In this earthling, made like unto the Glory-Spirit with respect to the threefold glory of royal dominion, moral excellence, and (in eschatological prospect) visual luminosity,²² creaturely reproduction of the heavenly King of kings is perfected.

The replication motif emerges distinctly on day seven in the Sabbath ordinance, designed to call man to the imitation of the divine sabbatical pattern. Discussion of this will be deferred, however, until we are dealing with the time coordinate of the Genesis cosmology.

As a final illustration of replication in the spatial dimension, we turn to the way the two-register pattern of the total cosmos, visible and invisible, is repeated within the visible, lower register by itself in its subdivision into an upper realm (heaven) and a lower realm (earth). This secondary, replicated two-register structure is highlighted by the arrangement of the contents of the two parallel triads of days according to their upper or lower location.

The first members of each triad are related to the upper level, the heaven: the light of the sky on day one and the heavenly luminaries on day four. The third members belong to the lower level, the earth: the land and its vegetation on day three and the land animals and

man on day six. And the second members are strikingly designed to serve as links between the first and third members. For these middle units of the two triads each combines both upper and lower levels: the sky and the sea in day two and the birds of the air and fish of the sea in day five.

Table 2 Location of Triads' Productions		
First Triad	Level	Second Triad
day one	upper	day four
day two	upper { lower	day five
day three	lower	day six

Here again we see that the two-register cosmology construct was a decisive factor in determining the literary shape of the Genesis prologue.²³

The Time Coordinate

Space and time, the cosmological coordinates, are correlative. Interlocking of the two is pronounced in God's seventh day rest, a temporal concept that connotes the spatial reality of the holy site of God's enthronement. Also indicative of their correlation is the giving of the temporal names "day and "night to the spatial phenomena of light and darkness (Gen. 1:5). It is inevitable then that the two-register structuring of the spatial dimension will also be found in the temporal dimension, and with it the archetype-replica relationship between the two registers. We have seen that by reason of this replication relationship earthly things are a rich source of metaphor for the realities of the invisible heaven. God is portrayed as hovering like an eagle over its nest and as resting like a man after his work is done (cf. Ex. 31:17); upper register space is designated "heaven after the upper level of visible space; etc. We naturally expect then that in the case of time, as of space, the upper register will draw upon the lower register for its figurative depiction. Therefore, when we find that God's upper level activity of issuing creative fiats from his heavenly throne is pictured as transpiring in a week of earthly days, we readily recognize that, in keeping with the pervasive contextual pattern, this is a literary figure, an earthly, lower register time metaphor for an upper register, heavenly reality.²⁴

Lower Register Time

Twin Record. Earthly time is articulated in the astronomical phenomena that measure off and structure its flow. It is the astral-solar-lunar relationships of the earth that define the units, the years and the days, in which man experiences (lower register) time. They produce the sequence of light and darkness that marks the days. They arrange the signs in

the sky that announce the seasonal round of the years. Time is named, its meaning is expressed, in this system of calibration. The establishing of this regulatory order by which lower register time is defined and in which it has its being is recorded in the creation account. Twice in fact: once at the beginning of the first triad of days (Gen. 1:3-5) and a second time at the beginning of the second triad (Gen. 1:14-19).

Temporal Recapitulation. The non-sequential nature of the creation narrative, and thus the non-literal nature of the creation "week, is evident from the recording of the institution of lower register time in both the first and fourth day-sections. This point must be developed here because of its importance as an independent argument against the solar-day and day-age views and because the exegesis involved is preparatory to other arguments below.

The forming and stationing of the sun, moon, and stars are attributed to day four. Their functions with respect to the earth are also stated here, first in the fiat section (Gen. 1:14, 15) and again (in reverse order) in the fulfillment section (Gen. 1:16-18). They are to give light on the earth and to rule by bounding light/day and darkness/night, as well as by demarcating the passage of years and succession of seasons. These effects which are said to result from the production and positioning of the luminaries on day four are the same effects that are already attributed to the creative activity of day one (Gen. 1:3-5). There too daylight is produced on the earth and the cycle of light/day and darkness/night is established. In terms of chronology, day four thus brings us back to where we were in day one, and in fact takes us behind the effects described there to the astral apparatus that accounts for them. The literary sequence is then not the same as the temporal sequence of events.

The non-sequential nature of the creation narrative, and thus the non-literal nature of the creation "week," is evident from the recording of the institution of lower register time in both the first and fourth day-sections.

To avoid this consequence, alternative interpretations of day four have been sought. According to one proposal, the luminaries (though unmentioned previously) were in existence before the point in time dealt with in day four and were indeed present at day one as the source of light spoken of there.²⁵ Day four describes simply their coming into sight, not their creation. Any such view is falsified by the language of the text, which is plainly that of actual production: "Let there be and God made and God set (lit., gave). The attempt²⁶ to override this language cannot be passed off as just another instance of phenomenological description. The proposed evasive tactic involves a very different notion -- not just the general denominating of objects according to their everyday observed appearance at any and all times, but the relating of a specific event at a particular juncture in the creation process as though witnessed by an observer of the course of events, someone who at the moment reached on day four is supposed to catch

sight of the luminaries, hitherto somehow hidden, perhaps by clouds. Disclaimers notwithstanding, this proposal is guilty of foisting an unwarranted meaning on the language affirming God's making and positioning of the luminaries. In the accounts of the other days, everybody rightly recognizes that the same language of divine fiat and creative fulfillment signifies the bringing into existence of something new, not just a visual detecting of something that was there all the while. There is no more excuse for reducing divine acts of production into human acts of perception in day four than there would be elsewhere.

Some advocates of the controverted approach to day four acknowledge more forthrightly its distinctiveness and develop more fully its peculiar feature of the seer figure.²⁷ An attempt is made to explain the precise sequence of the entire creation narrative by the exigencies of the visual experience of the hypothesized human spectator, as he is conducted through all the successive scenes. Besides the basic objection that it is belied by the language of origination used for the day four event, this form of the observer hypothesis is beset with a special problem of its own. Its suggested guided-tour perspective is a feature of apocalyptic visions, and there the presence of the seer figure is plainly mentioned. He is the one who narrates the visions unfolding before him. No such figure is introduced in the creation account; the alleged human spectator is a fiction imposed on the text contrary to its non-visionary genre.

Recognizing that the actual making of the luminaries is related in day four, but still trying to avoid the conclusion that the narrative order is thematic rather than sequential, some would subordinate the statement about the making of the luminaries (vv. 16, 17a) to the statement about their purpose or functions (vv. 17b, 18a), alleging that the only distinctive new development of day four is that these functions then become operational. But the primary declaration that the luminaries were made cannot be eliminated as a day four event in that way " no more so than the statement in the day two account that God made the firmament may be reduced to the idea that a previously existing firmament began to perform its stated purpose of dividing between the waters above and below (Gen. 1:6, 7). Moreover, this minimalist view of day four would share the fatal flaw of all views that eliminate the forming of the luminaries from the happenings of day four: it would leave day four with no new contribution, for all the functions mentioned there are already said to be operative in day one.²⁸

Also entailed in the minimalist interpretation of day four is the pluperfect rendering of the verbs expressing the making of the luminaries in the fulfillment section (vv. 16, 17), introduced by "and it was so (v. 15b). If adopted, the pluperfect could not be restricted to these verbs. For consistently in Genesis 1, what immediately follows the fiat and the "and it was so formula that answers to the fiat is a detailing of what God proceeded to bring into being in execution of the fiat. In day four then the verbs of fulfillment in verses 16, 17 cannot be pluperfect with respect to the fiat of verses 14, 15a. Temporally they follow the fiat, which means the fiat would have to be put in the same pluperfect tense as its subsequent fulfillment, yielding the translation "And God had said. That is, day four as a whole would have to be cast in the pluperfect, and that with reference to the time of the events in the preceding days. Ironically, such a translation would make explicit the non-

chronological sequence of the narrative, the very thing the pluperfect proposal was trying to avoid.²⁹

Understandably dissatisfied with the contrived nature of these attempts to avoid acknowledging that the act of making the luminaries was a day four event, other opponents of the non-sequential view of the creation narrative have been driven to seek a solution in a reinterpretation of day one. They would account for the presence of light and the cycle of day and night in day one by positing for this point in time some light source other than the one whose origin they admit is assigned to day four and which (according to their commitment to the temporally sequential order of the narrative) did not, therefore, exist until three days (or ages) after day one.

All indicators tell us that "in the beginning" belongs to the upper register, where Father, Son, and Spirit act together in sovereign purpose, word, and power to create the world.

Some speculate about a supernatural light source, a manifestation of divine glory in space. But that distorts the eschatological design of creation history, according to which the advent of God's Glory as the source of illumination that does away with the need for the sun awaits the Consummation.³⁰ Indeed, the assumption of such a supernatural mode of ongoing providence during the creation week is contradicted by the assumptions that inform Gen. 2:5ff.³¹

No more satisfactory is the suggestion that the hypothetical lighting system was some natural arrangement. That would raise questions about the wisdom of the divine procedure. Why would God create such a vast cosmic order only to discard it three days (or ages) later? Why create a replacement cosmos to perform the very same functions already being performed perfectly well by the original system?³² Like the gap theory of Gen. 1:2, this scenario, with its mid-course cosmic upheaval and starting over, would introduce a jarring, discordant note into the simple, stately symphony of the cosmic house-building "planned, performed, and perfected by the all wise master builder.

Any such approach that disconnects the luminaries of day four from the light of day one, denying the cause-effect relationship of the two, violates the overall thematic scheme of the creation narrative. As we have seen, the successive members of the first triad of days correspond to the successive days of the second triad, the relationship of each matching pair being that of creation kingdom (theme of the first triad) to creature king (theme of the second triad). The correspondence is especially close in the day one-day four pair. It is clearly the light phenomena (kingdom) of day one over which the luminaries (kings) of day four rule, producing and regulating it. Temporal recapitulation most certainly occurs at day four and hence there is no escaping the conclusion that the narrative sequence is not intended to be the chronological sequence.

Upper Register Time

The Beginning. As observed above, the allusions in Prov. 8:22, 23 to the *berē'it* of Gen. 1:1 show that this "beginning precedes the situation surveyed in Gen. 1:2ff. It stands at the head of the creation days. While belonging to the creation week,³³ it marks the interface of precreation and the space-time continuum, pointing back to what is signified by "was in the identification of God as the one "who is, and who was, and who is to come (Rev. 1:8). In Gen. 1:1 the "beginning is peculiarly associated with God himself. Similarly, echoes of *berē'it* in the Scriptures focus on divine acts and intratrinitarian relationships back of creation. Equating the beginning with a stage "before the earth was, Prov. 8:23 asserts that the personified divine Wisdom was present with God at the beginning (cf. Col. 1:17). The prologue of John's Gospel identifies "the beginning in terms of the relationship between God and the Logos, who was God and made all things (John 1:1-3), the one who identifies himself as "the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14; cf. Rev. 21:6; 22:13; Col. 1:15-18) and speaks of the glory he had with the Father "before the world was (John 17:5).

All indicators tell us that "in the beginning belongs to the upper register, where Father, Son, and Spirit act together in sovereign purpose, word, and power to create the world. "In the beginning is a time coordinate of invisible space. Entry into the six days that it is, "the beginning serves to identify them as also belonging to the invisible cosmological register.

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The Seventh Day. God is present at the beginning of creation; he is "the beginning. He is also "the end, for he appears at the completion of creation as the Sabbath Lord. The seventh day has to do altogether with God, with the upper register. The divine rest which characterizes the seventh day is the reign of the finisher of creation, enthroned in the invisible heavens in the midst of the angels.³⁴ It is precisely the (temporary) exclusion of man from this heavenly Sabbath of God that gives rise to the two-register cosmological order. At the Consummation, God's people will enter his royal rest, the seventh day of creation (Heb. 4:4, 9, 10), but until then that seventh creation day does not belong to the lower register world of human solar-day experience. It is heaven time, not earth time, not time measured by astronomical signs.

Not only the identification of the Sabbath rest with God's royal session on high, but the unending nature of that seventh day of creation differentiates it from earthly, solar-days. Consisting as it does in God's status as the one who has occupied the completed cosmic temple as the King of Glory " a

status without the possibility of any interruption or limitation " the seventh day is in the nature of the case unending. This is confirmed by the treatment of the theme of God's "rest in Hebrews 4. That rest is identified in verses 3 and 4 as God's seventh day of Gen. 2:2 (which is quoted). The passage then expounds God's rest as an ongoing reality, entrance into which is the eschatological hope of God's people (see esp. vv. 10, 11; cf. John 5:17). If the seventh day were not an unending Sabbath-rest for God but a literal day, would the next day be another work day, introducing another week of work and rest for him, to be followed by an indefinite repetition of this pattern? Are we to replace the Sabbath-Consummation doctrine of biblical eschatology with a mythological concept of cyclic time?³⁵ In the Genesis prologue the unending nature of God's Sabbath is signaled by the absence of the evening-morning formula from the account of the seventh day.

The Six Days. Under consideration here is the series of six numbered days and the accompanying evening-morning refrain. This refrain is not to be connected with the solar time phenomena of days one and four, for it is not confined to those two contexts but is included in all six day-sections and in every case is immediately conjoined to the numbered day. The imagery of the evening and morning is simply a detail in the creation-week picture. This refrain thus functions as part of the formularized framework of the account.

The question whether the references to the six days (with their evenings and mornings) describe lower register time phenomena or whether they belong to the upper register is answered in favor of the latter by the interlocking of the six days on both sides with upper register temporal features. Certainly the six days are part of the same strand as the seventh day, and the "beginning, as suggested above, is to be taken as the threshold of the creation week. Psalm 104 reflects this by similarly bracketing its treatment of the works of the six creation days (vv. 5-26 or 30) with upper register scenes of God in heaven, before (vv. 1-4) and after (vv. 27 or 31-35).

The six evening-morning days then do not mark the passage of time in the lower register sphere. They are not identifiable in terms of solar days, but relate to the history of creation at the upper register of the cosmos. The creation "week is to be understood figuratively, not literally " that is the conclusion demanded by the biblical evidence.

Replication: The Sabbath Ordinance

Rounding out the series of acts of spatial and temporal replication in the Genesis prologue is the reproduction of the pattern of the Creator's time in the instituting of the Sabbath ordinance.³⁶ This ordinance superimposed a special temporal grid on the calendar of days and seasons marked by astronomical sequences. The Sabbath was designed for symbolic purposes within the covenant community, as a sign calling to consecration and the imitation of God and as a seal promising consummation of the kingdom to the covenant keepers.³⁷ By this promise the Sabbath reminds us that lower register history as a whole is patterned after upper register time in that it is a Consummation-directed eschatological movement. The weekly scheme of the Sabbath ordinance portrays this overall seventh-day-bound design of lower register time while it

symbolically mirrors the archetypal heavenly creation week itself.

Exod. 20:11 brings out explicitly that the continuing earthly pattern of sabbatical weeks is a human copy of a divine original. Within the two-register cosmology of the creation account with all its replications of upper register realities in the lower register world, all of them reproductions with a difference, there can be no doubt about the figurative nature of the relationship of the Sabbath ordinance to God's upper register creation week. The gratuitous insistence of literalists that the terms of the Sabbath ordinance in Exod. 20:11 demand that the creation week be one of literal solar days is contradicted by the metaphorical character of the whole series of creational replications to which the original Sabbath ordinance (Gen. 2:3) belongs. Like man's nature as image of God, man's walk in imitation of God's sabbatical way is not a matter of one-to-one equivalence but of analogy, of similarity with a difference. Like all the other lower register replicas, the sabbatical week of the ordinance is a likeness of its original, not exactly the same; it is an earthly metaphor for the heavenly archetype.

The Genesis prologue thus concludes with the record of the instituting of the lower register phenomenon that provides the figurative chronological framework on which this literary composition has itself been constructed, the seven-day metaphor for the time dimension of God's creating the heavens and the earth.

Cosmogony and Providence

Our argument for the metaphorical nature of the creation week has included evidence that the narrative sequence of Genesis 1 is determined by thematic factors and is not intended to correspond to the actual temporal sequence, as maintained by both the solar-day and day-age views. For further light on this issue we now turn to Gen. 2:5-7.

The Genesis 2 Context

After the prologue, Genesis divides into ten sections with a refrain formula ("these are the generation of N. [lit.]) serving as the heading for each.³⁸ In keeping with the uniform meaning of this formula, Gen. 2:4 signifies that what follows recounts not the origins but the subsequent history of the heavens and the earth. Gen. 2:5ff. is thus identified as a record of the sequel to the world's creation, not as a second account of creation. This section does, however, pick up the story within the creation period (as does the next section at Gen. 5:1ff.). In doing so, it incidentally reveals something about the nature of divine providence during the creation week, something that cannot be accommodated by strictly sequential interpretations of Genesis 1.

Genesis 2 fixes attention on the lower register and, more precisely, on Eden as it sets the stage for the covenant crisis of Genesis 3. Here again the arrangement of the narrative is thematic rather than strictly chronological. At the beginning (vv. 5-7) and end (vv. 18-25)

the man and woman, the human principals in the probationary crisis, are reintroduced (cf. Gen. 1:27). The middle of the chapter describes the site of the dramatic event (vv. 8-14), calling attention to the two critical trees in the midst of the garden (v. 9). It reports the covenant stipulations on which the decisive testing was based (vv. 15-17), here too emphasizing the probation tree (vv. 16, 17). Thus the scene with its major features " the man, the woman, and the judgment tree " is set for the fateful action related in Genesis 3.

The weekly scheme of the Sabbath ordinance portrays this overall seventh-day-bound design of lower register time while it symbolically mirrors the archetypal heavenly creation week itself.

From this overview of Genesis 2 it is evident why, in the narrative of man's creation (vv. 5-7), the origin of vegetation (and thus of trees) is intertwined with his. Also, looking back at Genesis 1, we can now appreciate the artful designing that brought the first triad of days to a climax in trees and the second triad in man, so anticipating the crucial connection of the two unfolded in Genesis 2 and 3.

Exegesis of Genesis 2:5-7

To bring out the sovereign lordship of Yahweh-Elohim in establishing the covenantal order of man in the garden, under probation with its demands and promises, both represented by trees, the account takes us back to a time before there was a man or a garden and trees. It tells us how the Lord proceeded to form the man, plant the garden, and make its trees grow.

Gen. 2:5a says that at a certain time and place within the creation process vegetation did not yet exist. The language allows that the earth as a whole is referred to but the area particularly in view might be the Eden region, on which the following narrative focuses. Absent then were all plants, whether belonging to the unpeopled wilderness or to cultivated areas.

Gen. 2:5b explains why Yahweh-Elohim had not yet produced the vegetation. Rain is needed for the preservation and growth of plants, and God had not yet initiated the rain cycle. Of course, man can compensate for the local lack of rainfall by constructing an irrigation system, but man was not on the scene either. It is the assumption underlying this explanation for the timing of the creation of vegetation that confirms the conclusion that the Genesis 1 narrative is not chronologically sequential. To this we shall presently return.

Gen. 2:6 tells of the provision of a supply of water, the absence of which had previously delayed the appearance of vegetation. Whatever the meaning of the Hebrew 'ed (traditionally "mist), this verse cannot be describing another circumstance adverse to

plant life (like chaotic flood waters), for the effect of the 'ed was beneficial watering, such being the consistent meaning of the verb saqa.³⁹ Verse 6 must then be relating a new development, not something concurrent with the situation described in verse 5. For otherwise verse 6 would be affirming the presence of the supply of water necessary for the survival of vegetation at the very time when verse 5b says the absence of vegetation was due to the lack of such a water supply. The context thus demands the translation: "but an 'ed began to rise, an inceptive meaning that is agreeable to the usage of the imperfect form of the verb employed here."⁴⁰

The 'ed in verse 6 answered to the previous lack of rain in verse 5b. If the 'ed does not refer to rain but to some satisfactory alternative, the previous absence of that alternative should have been included in verse 5b in the listing of the missing sources of water. Indeed, if the 'ed solution is not equatable with the rain whose absence was the problem, the citing of the absence of rain in verse 5b would itself be stranded as an irrelevance. These considerations argue in support of the identification of the Hebrew 'ed with the Eblaitic i-du, "rain-cloud."⁴¹ Also, the one other context where 'ed is found is all about rain-clouds. That passage, Job 36, extols the greatness of God, who spreads the clouds abroad and sends down showers on man, so giving food in abundance (vv. 26-33). Verse 27a speaks of God's drawing forth the drops of water and then, repeating the image, the parallel clause in verse 27b adds the source from which the rain is distilled, namely the 'ed, apparently the rain-clouds. Similarly in Genesis 2 the originating of the 'ed as a watering system (v. 6) is implicitly attributed to Yahweh-Elohim by virtue of the previous tracing of the absence of that provision to his determination (v. 5b). Another Joban echo of this is heard in Job 38:25-30. Challenging Job's knowledge of storm phenomena, the Lord illustrates his own creation-wide sovereignty by the example of his provision of rain and vegetation, not just in agricultural areas but in the wilderness where no man is.

Gen. 2:5 reflects an environmental situation that has obviously lasted for a while; it assumes a far more leisurely pace on the part of the Creator, for whom a thousand years are as one day.

The springing forth of plants (at least the wild plants that need only the rain, not man the cultivator) is taken for granted in Gen. 2:6 as a consequence of the provision of the prerequisite water, a consequence occurring before the creation of man (v. 7). Even the Lord's planting of the garden with its trees (v. 8) is not to be located after the creation of man, since the form of the verb for planting can express the pluperfect.⁴² In the absence of rainfall, man can dig irrigation ditches to bring the necessary water to his cultivated land,⁴³ and therefore, to round out the explanation of the absence of vegetation in Gen. 2:5b, the absence of man was added to the absence of rain. But once God had caused it to rain, the Eden-garden could be planted without man being yet present.

When, therefore, the creation of man is narrated in Gen. 2:7, this act is not subordinated

to the theme of the production of vegetation. However symbiotic the relationship of man and the cultivated plants, man was not made for the plants but the plants for man. The report of man's creation (v. 7) stands apart as an independent statement announcing the presence of the main party in the upcoming probationary crisis to take place in connection with the trees of the garden " the theme of the following narrative.

Genesis 2:5 and the Creation "Week"

What was the nature of divine providence during the creation "week? More specifically, by what means did God preserve such things as he had brought into existence? Embedded in Gen. 2:5 is an answer to that question that has decisive implications for the interpretation of the chronological framework of the creation account.

Whatever uncertainty may perplex the exegesis of various details in Gen. 2:5-7, the point I am now making does not depend on the adoption of a particular interpretation of any of these details. It rests on " indeed, consists in " the simple, incontestable fact that Gen. 2:5 gives an explanation, a perfectly natural explanation, for the absence of vegetation somewhere within the creation "week. ⁴⁴ Gen. 2:5 tells us that God did not produce the plants of the field before he had established an environment with a watering system, the natural, normal precondition for plant life. The assumption underlying Gen. 2:5 is clearly that a natural mode of divine providence was in operation during the creation "days.

Acts of supernatural origination did initiate and punctuate the creation process. And had God so pleased, his providential oversight of what he had created might also have been by supernatural means during that process. Gen. 2:5, however, takes it for granted that providential operations were not of a supernatural kind, but that God ordered the sequence of creation acts so that the continuance and development of the earth and its creatures could proceed by natural means. This unargued assumption of Gen. 2:5 contradicts the reconstructions of the creation days proposed by the more traditional views.

The scenario conjured by the literalists' solar-day interpretation is, in fact, utterly alien to the climate and tenor of Gen. 2:5. Within the flurry of stupendous events which their view entails, each new cosmic happening coming hard on the heels of the last and all transpiring within a few hours or days, the absence of vegetation or anything else at any given point would not last long enough to occasion special consideration of the reasons for it. Within that time-frame such a question would be practically irrelevant. Gen. 2:5 reflects an environmental situation that has obviously lasted for a while; it assumes a far more leisurely pace on the part of the Creator, for whom a thousand years are as one day. The tempo of the literalists' reconstructed cosmogony leaves no room for the era-perspective of Gen. 2:5. ⁴⁵

And in specific contradiction of the disclosure of Gen. 2:5, both the solar-day and day-age theories must assume that God used other than the ordinary secondary means in the providential sustaining and further shaping of what his creative word had called into being.

The more traditional interpretations of the creation account are guilty not only of creating a conflict between the Bible and science but, in effect, of pitting Scripture against Scripture.

We have already seen that any view that insists day four presents events chronologically later than those in day one must posit some means other than the sun, moon, and stars of day four, something extraordinary or even supernatural, to account for the effects of light and the day-night cycle mentioned in day one. It would also have to be by some such means that the vegetation whose production is described in day three was sustained apart from the presence of the normally prerequisite sun of day four. Likewise, on any strictly sequential interpretation of the narrative, the existence of all flora (day three) before any fauna (days five and six) would include extraordinary means of preservation in those symbiotic situations where the survival of a particular kind of vegetation is dependent on the activity of animal life. And of course the existence of the earth itself on day one confronts the traditional approaches with a gigantic exception to normal providential procedure. For according to them the earth would have come into existence by itself as a solitary sphere, not as part of the cosmological process by which stars and their satellites originate, and it would have continued alone, suspended in a spatial void (if we may so speak) for the first three "days of creation. All the vast universe whose origin is narrated on day four would then be younger (even billions of years younger) than the speck in space called earth. So much for the claimed harmony of the narrative sequence of Genesis 1 with scientific cosmology.⁴⁶

In short, if the narrative sequence were intended to represent the chronological sequence, Genesis 1 would bristle with contradictions of what is revealed in Gen. 2:5. Our conclusion is then that the more traditional interpretations of the creation account are guilty not only of creating a conflict between the Bible and science but, in effect, of pitting Scripture against Scripture. The true harmony of Genesis 1 and Gen. 2:5 appears, however, and the false conflict between the Bible and science disappears, when we recognize that the creation "week is a lower register metaphor for God's upper register creation-time and that the sequence of the "days is ordered not chronologically but thematically.⁴⁷

Notes

¹["Because It Had Not Rained"](#), The Westminster Theological Journal 20 (1958):146-157.

² Cf. H. Blocher, *In the Beginning* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984); C. E. Hummel, *The Galileo Connection* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986); R. Maatman, *The Impact of Evolutionary Theory: A Christian View* (Sioux Center: Dordt College Press, 1993).

³ Theological differences aside, the cosmology of mythology is analogous. Indeed,

mythology may be defined formally precisely as a portrayal of human affairs in terms of a dynamic interrelating of divine and human realms.

⁴ Similarly, the depths of the sea or subsurface earth metaphorically signify the infernal realm.

⁵ "Heaven of heavens (cf. Deut. 10:14; 1 Kgs. 8:27; Neh. 9:6; Pss. 115:16; 148:4) apparently distinguishes a "higher heaven, possibly the clouds of heaven (the waters "above the heavens, cf. Ps. 148:4) or the invisible heavens.

⁶ For elaboration of this theme see my *Kingdom Prologue* (privately published, 1993), pp. 31, 32.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ The tabernacle and temple were so designed that both in their horizontal and vertical sectioning they also portrayed the visible register of the cosmic temple with its corresponding partitioning. Cf. my *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 39-42 (hereafter, *Images*).

⁹ This example thus contains the additional feature of the likeness of the lower to the upper phenomenon. Comparison of these reliefs with literary accounts of warfare as a two-level affair involving earthly conflict of nations below and divine or angelic contention in the heavens (cf. Dan. 10:12, 13, 20, 21; Zech. 9:13, 14) illustrates how these cultural media can be mutually illuminating.

¹⁰ For a discussion of *berē'it*, see below.

¹¹ See further W. P. Brown, *Structure, Role, and Ideology in the Hebrew and Greek Texts of Genesis 1:1-2:3* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), p. 102, n. 12.

¹² The same question arises in Exod. 20:11. On this, see the discussion of the phrase "the heavens and the earth below.

¹³ If one does so insist, then recognition of what Proverbs 8 reveals about *berē'it* in Gen. 1:1 would compel adoption of some variety of the discredited gap theory to account for the earth in Gen. 1:2.

¹⁴ Cf. the observations of A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 91.

¹⁵ On the common use of avian imagery for deity in the ancient Near East see my "The Feast of Cover-over, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 37 (1994): 497, 498 (hereafter, "Cover-over). Cf., e.g., in pharaonic nomenclature the Horus (or *serekh*) name.

¹⁶ For an extensive treatment of this see my *Images*.

¹⁷ Cf. Images, pp. 22, 23.

¹⁸ This alternating sequence of heavenly and earthly scenes is similar to the pattern of the prologue to Job. The similarity is not just formal, for in each case what takes place in the lower register is determined by the sovereign word of God revealed in the heavenly council.

¹⁹ Space and time are conceptually correlative in the Sabbath. In our analysis of the time coordinate of this cosmological charting the Sabbath will be given closer consideration.

²⁰ This will be spelled out in our discussion of the replication relationship of the two registers. Evidence will appear there for preferring the kingdom-king analysis of the themes of the two triads over something more general, like regions and their occupants or habitations and inhabitants.

²¹ Cf. my "Cover-over.

²² Cf. my Images.

²³ These data also attest further to the parallelism between the successive members of the two triads of days.

²⁴ Following nineteenth century theologian W. G. T. Shedd, C. J. Collins identifies the creation days as an anthropomorphism, part of an extended anthropomorphic portrayal of the Creator as the worker-craftsman; cf. "How Old Is The Earth? Anthropomorphic Days in Genesis 1:1-2:3, *Presbyterion* 20 (1994): esp. 117, 118 (hereafter, "How Old). As over against the literalists, this is moving in the right direction. But the explanation needs adjustment, for not all the metaphors used of God are anthropomorphic (cf., e.g., the avian image in Gen. 1:2) and some of them refer to heavenly realities other than God. It is rather a matter of two-register cosmology and an archetype-ectype relationship between the entire two registers in both their spatial and temporal dimensions.

²⁵ I would agree that this is in fact a correct view of the day one situation, but not that that situation was before day four.

²⁶ For a recent example, cf. Collins, "How Old, p. 123, n. 55.

²⁷ A recent case is D. L. Roth, "Genesis and the Real World, *Kerux* 9 (1994): 30-54.

²⁸ The role of ruling cannot be isolated as a new function distinct from those mentioned in day one. In Gen. 1:18 ruling the day and night is explicated as dividing the light from the darkness (equivalent to dividing the day from the night, v. 14).

²⁹ A pluperfect rendering of the wayyiqtol-form introducing this section is grammatically defensible, precisely because it begins a paragraph, and that would bring out the true

temporal relationship of Gen. 1:14ff. to what immediately precedes. But though this would establish my thesis without more ado, I would retain the translation, "And God said (v. 14) and God made (v. 16) in order to preserve the picture of seven successive days, leaving it to the other available evidence to demonstrate the figurative nature of this picture and the dischronologized sequence of the contents of the days.

³⁰ Note also that the presence of this divine Luminary puts an end to the cycle of day and night instituted on day one (Rev. 22:5).

³¹ On this, see below.

³² Indeed, in line with the anthropic principle, the original system would necessarily have been virtually the same as its replacement. Cf. R. Maatman, *The Bible, Natural Science, and Evolution* (Sioux Center: Dordt College Press, 1970), p. 111; A. Lightman, *Ancient Light* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press, 1991), pp. 117-121.

³³ This conclusion is required by Exod. 20:11, particularly if the "heaven it refers to as being made during the "six days includes the invisible heavens, whose formation, unlike that of the earth, was exclusively within "the beginning.

³⁴ Cf. my *Kingdom Prologue*, pp. 22-25.

³⁵ The issue of creation-consummation eschatology is theologically crucial, for bound up with it is the Bible's doctrine of the covenant with its decisive probationary crisis and the principle of federal representation.

³⁶ For a discussion of the Sabbath as a creation ordinance, see my *Kingdom Prologue*, p. 50.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.N

³⁹ Ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies contain the motif of an absence of water that is subsequently remedied, with fruitful fields resulting. Examples are the Sumerian myth of Enki and the World Order and the Akkadian Myth of Anzu. For discussion see R. J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), pp. 34f., 84.

⁴⁰ See the discussions of preterital *yiqtol* in P. Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993), pp. 368-9 and of incipient past non-perfective in B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), pp. 503-4. Cf. S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1881), pp. 27, 36ff. Suggested examples, besides cases involving stative verbs, include Gen. 37:7; Exod. 15:5, 12, 14; 2 Sam. 15:37 (cf. 16:15); 1 Kings 7:7, 8; Jer. 6:14.

⁴¹ Cf. M. Dahood, "Eblaite *ì-du* and Hebrew 'ed, 'Rain Cloud,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981): 534-38. Other suggested etymologies for 'ed produce meanings like flood or subterranean rivers, which break through and water the surface. On such interpretations (and on the rain-cloud view too) the 'eres from which the 'ed ascends could be the deeps beneath the earth (cf. Exod. 15:12).

⁴² Compare the similar grammatical-compositional situation in Gen. 2:19, which surely does not intend to suggest that the animals were made after the creation of Adam and his experience in the garden described in verses 7-18.

⁴³ This is a function of mankind featured in the ancient cosmogonies.

⁴⁴ One thing showing that the situation described is within the six-day era is that man was not yet present. My essential contention is not affected whether the lack of vegetation mentioned be earthwide or local (the Eden area) and no matter to which "day the vegetationless situation pertains.

⁴⁵ Endorsing my argument as originally published, H. Blocher examines the criticism of it by E. J. Young (*Studies in Genesis One* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1964], pp. 58-65) and concludes that Young "misses the main point (In the Beginning, p. 56, n. 56).

⁴⁶ Some of these problems of sequence (but not the major one involving days one and four) would be resolved by a variation on the day-age view which allows that the days may overlap. The idea is that while what is described as happening on a given day must have begun to happen before the next day's developments began, the completing of the earlier day's creative work would have overlapped the activity of subsequent days. This contrived interpretation not only fails to salvage the chronological sequence even in the compromised overlapping form proposed, but it actually amounts to a virtual acknowledgment that chronological sequence yields to thematic interests in the ordering of the days.

⁴⁷ In this article I have advocated an interpretation of biblical cosmogony according to which Scripture is open to the current scientific view of a very old universe and, in that respect, does not discountenance the theory of the evolutionary origin of man. But while I regard the widespread insistence on a young earth to be a deplorable disservice to the cause of biblical truth, I at the same time deem commitment to the authority of scriptural teaching to involve the acceptance of Adam as an historical individual, the covenantal head and ancestral fount of the rest of mankind, and the recognition that it was the one and same divine act that constituted him the first man, Adam the son of God (Luke 3:38), that also imparted to him life (Gen. 2:7).
