

The Creation and evolution

Additional study material

A discipleship training to equip
Christians for works of service,
so that the Body of Christ may
be built up (Ephesians 4:11-16).

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CREATION AND EVOLUTION (GENESIS 1:1 – 2:25)

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A. THEORIES CONCERNING EVOLUTION

There are basically two theories about the origin of existence. The one is the theory of evolution and the other is the theory of creation. There are 3 kinds of evolution theories. Let us look at each one very shortly.

1. Evolution as a philosophy.

An *atheist* believes that in the beginning there was primeval matter. It always existed or its origin is unknown. This primeval matter developed by itself, without direction or intervention by a personal God into the present existing forms. All reality is governed by unchangeable physical laws, and ultimately is the product of *mere chance*. There is *no reason* for existence and *no purpose* for life. Man is his own lawgiver and has no moral accountability except possibly to human society. The basis of ethics is *utilitarian* - that which produces the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Evaluation of evolution as a philosophy.

If all matter has been combined by *mere chance*, then the molecules of the atheist's brain are also the product of mere chance. Then his philosophies and his logic are mere chance. Then his arguments have no more validity than any other argument. *By saying that there are no absolutes, he is asserting a very dogmatic absolute.*

2. Evolution as a descriptive mechanism.

A *scientist* believes that evolution is the process by which less-advanced forms of life develop into higher forms of greater complexity. This process is brought about by the accumulation of chance characteristics and the retention of slight variations that arose during the earlier stages of the species' career and were genetically handed down to succeeding generations.

Evaluation of evolution as a descriptive mechanism.

▪ Genetics.

However, this so-called "survival of the fittest" process of evolution (i.e. the best adapted kinds continue to exist) is disproved by the science of genetics. Genetics prove that the range of variation possible within a species is strictly limited. There is no possibility to develop into a new and different species.

▪ Archaeology.

Moreover the so-called "theory of missing links" is disproved by the science of archaeology. Each of the 32 known orders of mammals appeared quite suddenly in "the paleontological period" (fossil period). In that period, the earliest known members of every order already possessed their basic characteristics. Not a single case showed an approximately continuous sequence from one order to another. There never existed intermediates between the so-called "lower" and "higher" orders on the ladder of biological development.

3. Theistic evolution.

A *deist* believes in the existence of God as a Creator of all material substance of the universe and the Designer of all the processes of evolution. After programming the entire system of evolution, he retires and watches from a distance how this cosmic mechanism works itself out, that is, how the originally created matter evolves into the present universe. Such a God takes no interest in his creatures and is beyond the reach of prayer. Generally the deist believes that modern

man gradually developed from subhuman beings (like ape-men), and finally developed a consciousness of God. The deist says that at the time he developed a consciousness of God (or devised 'god') the "ape-man" became "man" (Adam).

Evaluation of theistic evolution.

A deist does not take the biblical revelation serious. The Bible teaches not only *God's creation* of matter (the material substance of the universe), but also *God's completion* of creation! The Bible teaches the completion of the creation of the entire universe with all its bodies (sun, moon and stars), and the creation of the planet earth in its present form (with atmosphere, land and sea), with its great variety of species (of plants, trees, flying creatures, swimming creatures, land creeping creatures, wild animals, domestic animals and man). And Jesus Christ teaches that man's creation was a historical fact. He said, "Have you not read that at the beginning the Creator made¹ them male and female?" (Matthew 19:4)(Genesis 1:27).

B. THEORIES CONCERNING CREATION

There are three kinds of creation theories. Let us look at each one very shortly.

1. The gap theory.

▪ The original earth.

Some Christians attempt to harmonise the discoveries of modern science with a particular view of the creation account in Genesis 1 and believe that there was a very long time gap between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. They say that "in the beginning" God created the original, perfect universe (Genesis 1:1) and they quote Isaiah 45:18a to prove that God did not create that earth empty², but inhabited it with creatures (however, without man).

▪ The catastrophe.

They believe that after millions of years, suitable for the geological ages, the earth *became empty and formless*³. They believe that the surface of the earth experienced a period of catastrophe in which most or all of its life perished.

Some Christians believe that during this indeterminate period between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, the fall of Satan (Isaiah 14:12-14) and the other angels (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6) occurred. They believe that God destroyed the first perfect creation because of the rebellion of Satan and the evil angels.

▪ The recreated earth.

After this catastrophe, God *recreated* the earth in a period of six days of twenty-four hours each (Genesis 1:3-31).

Evaluation of the gap theory.

The gap theory is an attempt to harmonise the discoveries of modern science with a particular view of the creation account in Genesis 1 and must be rejected.

▪ Genesis 1:1-2 teaches creation in the beginning and Genesis 1:3-31 teaches the completion of this creation.

Genesis 1:1 does not state that God created the heaven and earth 'perfect' in the sense of 'complete'. Genesis 1:2 clearly says that the earth was empty, not 'became empty', formless, dark and in a fluid state. And Genesis 2:1 clearly says that God completed, not recreated this creation in six creation days.

▪ Isaiah 45:18 is not a prophecy of an original inhabited earth in Genesis 1:1.

Isaiah 45:18 is not a commentary of Genesis 1:1. Like Isaiah 45:12, Isaiah 45:18 speaks of the one and only creation of the heavens and the earth in which man inhabited the earth and says that God intended to keep the earth inhabited in spite of the vast destruction caused by king Cyrus (Isaiah 45:1-2), who overran many nations and founded the Medo-Persian Empire. God speaks of himself as the Creator of heaven, earth and man (Isaiah 45:18) and as the Saviour of all those people who turn to him (Isaiah 45:19-22). God gives the nations hope saying that it is not his plan to make the earth empty, but to keep it inhabited. In verse 18 the earth cannot be interpreted as "inhabited *with the exception of man*"!

▪ Jeremiah 4:23 is not a prophecy of an original catastrophe after Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:2 does not say that the earth "became" empty, but that the earth "was" empty, formless (in a state of being a flood) and dark. In Jeremiah 4:23-28, Jeremiah does not speak of a *past* catastrophe after the creation, but rather speaks of God's *future* judgement of Israel during the Babylonian exile in terms of the words of Genesis 1:1-2. Jeremiah *applies* the words of Genesis 1:2 and predicts the almost total destruction of Israel by the enemy from the north (the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar).

¹ Greek εποίησεν (made), Hebrew: bara< = to create

² Hebrew: tohu

³ Hebrew: tohu wa-bohu

- **Genesis 1:3-31 does not teach the recreation of the present earth.**

In the Bible, there is no allusion to “a so-called original inhabited earth”, followed by “a catastrophe and a later empty earth” and again followed by “our present inhabited earth” created in six creation days! Geologists say that the orderly progression of fossils in the rocks excludes any such “catastrophe theory of creation”. The Bible teaches clearly that in the beginning God created the universe and the planet earth without relating how long the creation took. The six days were creation days completing God’s creation, also without relating how long one creation day was.

- **Genesis does not teach that the fall of Satan was accompanied by a total ruin of the earth.**

Evil had not entered God’s creation until after the completion of creation, because the completed creation “was very good” (Genesis 1:31)! Satan must have fallen between Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 3:1. And even after evil had entered God’s creation (Genesis 3:1), the Bible nowhere says that the fall of Satan was accompanied by a total ruin of the earth itself. Isaiah 14⁴ and Ezekiel 28⁵ do not describe the destruction of the earth at the fall of Satan, but rather the fall of the kings of Babylon and Tyre in terms of the fall of Satan.

2. The flood theory.

- **The earth before the catastrophe.**

Some Christians believe that about ten thousand years ago, the universe was created in six days of twenty-four hours each.

- **The catastrophe (the flood).**

Then the great flood, described in Genesis 6-8, occurred. They claim it was accompanied by huge earthquakes and tidal waves (tsunami’s) rushing at thousands of kilometres an hour.

- **The earth after the catastrophe.**

The flood accounts for the fossils in the various layers of rocks. The various “geologic strata” (the layers of rocks in the earth) were laid down, not over a period of millions of years, but in a short period and through the catastrophic upheavals caused by the flood.

Evaluation of the flood theory.

The flood theory is an attempt to harmonise the discoveries of modern science with a particular view of the creation account in Genesis 1 and must be rejected.

- **The flood is a biblical historic reality.**

The flood was caused by “the bursting forth of all the springs of the great deep” and “the opening of the floodgates of the heavens” - figurative speech for the enormous amount of water released from the earth and the sky. Unceasing heavy rainfall from heaven for 40 days caused the flood to cover the whole earth and all its mountains (Genesis 7:11-12,17-20), killing every living thing on earth except the 8 people and the animals in the ark (Genesis 7:21-23). For the next 110 days (of the 150 days or 5 months)(Genesis 7:24, cf. Genesis 7:11 with Genesis 8:4) the flood slowly receded and the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (in modern Turkey, highest peak is 5156 m).

- **The flood is a secular historic reality.**

The flood was remembered by the descendants of Noah in Babylonia, India, China and other ancient cultures. They all wrote about it in their ancient accounts (clay tablets, books and letters of the alphabet).

- **The flood in biblical and geologic perspective.**

While Christians believe in the world-wide flood, the Bible does not state anything about *earthquakes* and *tidal waves* or anything about the flood’s effects on *the geologic strata* of the earth. Geologists do not believe that the geologic strata (the layers of rocks in the earth) were caused by a catastrophe like the flood. They point out that the various geologic strata have been deposited in a uniform, steady fashion over tremendously long periods of time. For example, coal beds all over the world appear to have been formed by successive growths of hundreds of metres of vegetation

⁴ In **Isaiah 14:12-14** the fall of the wicked king of Babylon is described in terms of the fall of Satan. Babylon was the capitol of a mighty empire, which is situated in modern Iraq. For centuries the kings of Babylon had great aspirations to rule the world. The fall of the king of Babylon and his empire is described in terms of what the prophet Isaiah knew about the fall of Satan. By his self-deification, the king of Babylon followed in the footsteps of Satan and also became a type of the future Antichrist. His humiliation and fall therefore also followed that of Satan.

Like the king of Babylon, Satan was called “Morningstar”, because this star shines so beautifully in the morning. He arrogantly desired to be enthroned in heaven over everybody on earth and to make himself like the Almighty God. He desired to grab and possess what belonged to God alone. Therefore, Satan fell from heaven and was cast down to the earth. More than this we do not know about the origin and fall of Satan.

⁵ In **Ezekiel 28:11-19** the fall of the wicked king of Tyre is described in terms of the fall of Satan. Tyre was for centuries the most renowned merchant city of the Phoenicians, which is situated in modern Lebanon. It was built on several islands and well fortified. It had a great fleet of merchant ships.

The final fall of the king of Tyre and his kingdom is described in terms of what the prophet Ezekiel knew about the fall of Satan. Tyre fell because of its corruption in commerce and its violence in war. The king of Tyre fell because he became proud and corrupted his wisdom.

Like the king of Tyre, Satan was originally created and anointed by God to be a guardian angel. He was wise and very beautiful. He dwelt in the presence of God and was also present in the Garden of Eden. He was blameless in his ways until wickedness was found in him. He became proud on account of his beauty and corrupted his wisdom on account of his splendour. In 1 Timothy 3:6 we read that the devil fell under God’s judgement because he became conceited. God opposes the proud (Isaiah 2:17; 13:11; 1 Peter 5:5) and he drove Satan in disgrace out of his presence. He expelled him from heaven and threw him to the earth (cf. Revelation 12:3-4).

(plants and forests). “Specimen Ridge” in Yellowstone Park shows how 18 successive forests were wiped out by lava, apparently over a very long period of time. Scientists use radioactive methods to date the geological strata. Nevertheless, these methods of dating are currently questioned. What is certain is that the Bible does not make any statement concerning the geological strata of the earth.

3. The day-age theory.

- **The creation took ages of time.**

Some Christians believe that, because the word for “day”⁶ can be translated by different words like “day” (a creation day, light of day, day-time, day of 24 hours), or “time” (season, period of time, age), the word “day” of the six days of creation in Genesis 1 should be translated as “age”. “The six creation days” should then be understood as “six creation ages”.

- **The time of creation corresponds to the vast periods of geologic time.**

The six creation days (ages) roughly correspond to the vast periods of geologic time. They point to different stages of progressive creation rather than six literal days of 24 hours of creation.

Evaluation of the day-age theory.

The day-age theory is also an attempt to harmonise the discoveries of modern science with a particular view of the creation account in Genesis 1 and must be rejected.

- **The word “day”.**

The word “day” certainly does not have the same meaning throughout Genesis chapter 1 and 2. It cannot be *maintained* that the word “day” only means “a day of 24 hours”. But neither can it be *assumed* that the word “day” means “a period of time lasting millions and millions of years in accordance with the geologic ages”. Exactly how long the creation took, whether very long or very short, is simply not stated in the Bible.

- **The creation in biblical and geologic perspective.**

The science of geology does not teach the evolution of the world in *six* geological ages. The *order* of events in the six creation days in Genesis do not conform to the order of the evolutionary scheme. The *purpose* of the six creation days in Genesis is not quite the same as the purpose of the science of geology.

C. THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE IN ITS ORIGINAL STATE (Genesis 1:1-2)

1. The creation is a revelation from God in historical form.

The Bible does not pose or defend a particular creation *theory*. The Bible does not tell a creation *story* and also does not record a creation *myth*. The event is not given in a *vision* and also not in the form of a *poem*, an *allegory* or any other kind of symbolism. The Bible *reveals the fact of creation in the form of a historical event* (but then in the framework of God’s “time”). The creation is completed with the creation of man. The creation of man is the beginning of human history (in the framework of man’s “time”). God communicated with man throughout Genesis chapter 1 to 4. Thus God must have revealed the history of creation to man in the beginning, possibly to the first people. He revealed that it was he who created the universe, the earth and everything on it. And they passed this knowledge on to posterity. It was finally recorded in the Bible.

2. The time of creation.

God in his inscrutable wisdom does not reveal *when* he created the universe. That information is not necessary for man to live according to God’s plan. The words “in the beginning” mean that God’s plan to create existed from eternity and it was carried out before the beginning of human history. Compare the words said of the pre-existent Christ, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Man is absolutely *incapable of imagining what “the beginning” was like, let alone calculating the beginning of this “time”*, because (human) “time” was only created during the completion of the creation (Genesis 1:14). “In the beginning” was thus *before* (human) “time” was even created!

3. The method of creation.

God in his inscrutable wisdom does not reveal exactly *how* he created the universe or *how long ago* he created or *how long he took* to create! Also that information is not necessary for man to live according to God’s plan. God created the universe “at his command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (Hebrews 11:3). “God called things that are not as though they were” (Romans 4:17). By “God’s speaking” “energy”, “matter”, “space” and “time” were created and received existence, while before his speaking these had no existence at all. “God’s speaking” expresses *the way in which God carries out his will*. In the Bible, God revealed that “creation by his speaking” is the way by which humans should describe the creation process. *How* the universe was actually created by God’s speaking is not revealed in the Bible. Whether there was a process of creation or not, and whether the creation took a long time or

⁶ Hebrew: jom

not, is not revealed in the Bible. The creation of the universe including the earth was such a powerful act of God that it is absolutely unimaginable, inscrutable and incomprehensible for man. Man is absolutely incapable of imagining “how” God created the universe, let alone describing it! These facts must be revealed!

The *scientific theories* concerning the origin of the universe must therefore be regarded as *human theories* based on only the available information discovered up to this time. They must moreover be regarded as *theories that need to be revised and amended again and again!* A Christian need not feel threatened by the so-called scientific theories of the origin of the universe including the earth. A Christian accepts God’s revelation of the history of creation completely, but must also realise that non-Christians also think about ultimate questions such as “Where do I come from?” “Who am I?” “Why am I here?” and “Where am I going?”

4. The order of creation.

▪ The creation order in six days.

The intention of the formula “and it became evening, and it became morning, - the first day”, etc. was to show that there were definite and distinct *stages in God’s creational procedure*. As these “six days” were “divine creation days” and not “days on earth”, the length or duration of these “six days” cannot be determined.

▪ The creation order in two groups of parallel areas.

God is not only an artful Creator, but also an artful Communicator. The last three creation days have certain notable parallels with the first three creation days:

1. light created	4. light functions assigned to heavenly bodies
2. separation of water /vapour above and water below	5. life in water /vapour above (birds) and water below (fish)
3. land separated from the sea + plant life	6. life on land : animal life + human life

God first created light, the atmosphere in the midst of water and the continents with their vegetation. Then God assigned certain bodies (sun, moon and stars) to be light bearers for the earth, populated atmosphere with birds and the waters with fish, and finally populated the earth with living creatures and man.

5. Translation of Genesis 1:1-2.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth⁷”. Literally: “And the earth was (three things:) emptiness, and formlessness, and darkness over the face of the deep⁸, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters⁹.”

6. The universe.

The words “the heavens and the earth” in the Old Testament denotes “the universe”: creation of *the universe* (Genesis 1:1; Genesis 2:4; Isaiah 45:12,18; Isaiah 48:13), possessor of *the universe* (Genesis 14:19,22; Psalm 89:11), size of *the universe* (Psalm 103:11), sovereignty over *the universe* (Psalm 135:6), dissolution of *the universe* (Isaiah 34:4) and creation of the new *universe* (Isaiah 65:17; Isaiah 66:22). In Genesis 1:1 it denoted the universe as it existed before it’s further forming and ordering described in Genesis 1:3-31.

7. The emptiness.

The Hebrew word “tohu” describes idols, their “uselessness”, they do no good and cannot rescue (1 Samuel 12:21). It describes the land of Edom judged by God, its “emptiness” (not “chaos”)(Isaiah 34:11). It describes nations, their “nothingness”, insignificance, vanity and futility (Isaiah 40:17). It describes world leaders, their “nothingness”, their short life and mortal nature (Isaiah 40:23). It describes arguments, their “emptiness”, devoid of content, logic and reasonableness (Isaiah 59:4). It describes deserts, their “being trackless”, wild, uncharted, without marks of life and utter lonely nature (Job 12:24; Psalm 107:40). It especially describes God’s creation: he spreads the northern skies over “empty space” and suspends the earth over nothing (Job 26:7). Thus, the Hebrew word “tohu” in Genesis 1:2 should be translated with “emptiness”. *The earth was still “empty (devoid)” of the numerous living creatures which now populate the earth. The earth was still “a wide emptiness”.*

8. The formlessness.

The Hebrew word “bohu” describes the land of Edom after it has been judged by God, its “formlessness” (not desolation). God would completely break down everything as thoroughly as one built it up with measuring line and plumb line. The ruins would have no distinct form. The land would be empty and *formless*¹⁰ (Isaiah 34:11). It describes the land of Israel after it has been judged by God, its “formlessness” (Jeremiah 4:23). Jeremiah’s vision in Jeremiah 4:23-28 does not speak of any *past* emptiness and formlessness, but speaks of the *future* judgement of Israel in terms of the words of Genesis 1:2. The land of Israel would figuratively speaking be as empty, formless and dark as the earth was before the creation was completed. Jeremiah’s *application* of this vision is his prediction of the almost total

⁷ Hebrew: bereshit bara< elohim et ha-shamajim we-et ha-arets

⁸ Hebrew: we-ha-arets *haita* tohu, wa-bohu, we-hoshek al pene tehom

⁹ Hebrew: we-ruach elohim merachefet al pene ha-majim

¹⁰ Hebrew: tohu wa-bohu

destruction of Israel by the coming enemy from the north (the Babylonians): the land would be emptied of people, the land would become as formless as a desert and the heavens above would become black as a figurative sign of mourning over Israel's state. Thus, the Hebrew word "bohu" in Genesis 1:2 should be translated with "formlessness". *The earth had not yet attained the orderly form which it now has after the completion of the creation. The earth was still "formless"*.

9. The darkness over the deep.

Light was still absent on earth. The word "deep"¹¹ describes "the interior of the earth" from which the springs burst forth water (Genesis 8:2). It describes "the deep sea or oceans" (Job 7:12; Psalm 36:6). And it describes "the flood" which covered the earth (Psalm 104:6-9). The Hebrew word "majim" is not only used to denote "water", but also "the liquid form" of something: the juice of poisoned plants (Jeremiah 8:14; Jeremiah 9:15; Jeremiah 23:15) or the melting of hearts that became like water (i.e. lost its firmness and resoluteness)(Joshua 7:5). The "waters" over which the Spirit of God hovered is just another description of the "deep". Thus, the Hebrew word "deep" in Genesis 1:2 should be translated with "flood". *The earth should be viewed as not yet having a solid state, as being in a liquid (flood state). The dry land of the continents in distinction to the water of the oceans had not yet been formed.*

10. The Spirit of God hovered over the waters.

The sentence should not be translated "a wind of God bred on the waters". The Hebrew word "merachefet" does not describe "breeding", similar to the notion of some heathen nations concerning the origin of everything as something "breeding on an egg". The word denotes Jeremiah's "trembling" before the Lord's holy words (Jeremiah 23:9) or the "hovering" of a mother bird over her young when they try to fly for the first time (Deuteronomy 32:11). Thus, the sentence in Genesis 1:2 should be translated "the Spirit of God hovered over the waters". The sentence does not describe *an action* (of creation) by God, but rather *the presence* of God himself. *The Spirit of God was hovering over the creation (that is: the Spirit of God was present at creation), sustaining what has already been created and preparing it for further forming.*

D. THE COMPLETION OF THE CREATION OF THE EARTH (Genesis 1:3 – 2:3)

After the creation of the heavens and the earth, the earth was still empty, formless, dark and in a fluid state. There was no light on earth. There was no form of life on earth. The earth itself did not have any ordered form (Genesis 1:2).

The following six creation days (Genesis 1:3-31) refer back to Genesis 1:2 and bring a vast change to the original state of the earth as described in Genesis 1:2. The six creation days set forth the orderly progressive stages in which God completed (Genesis 2:1) his work of creating the planet earth as we know it today.

1. The first day of creation (Genesis 1:3-5).

▪ God's creative command.

God said, "*Let there be*¹² light and there was light". God created *light*¹³. The nature of physical light and the way it came into existence is not revealed in the Bible. The creation of physical light was an inscrutable act of God's majesty. The original state of the earth was *darkness*¹⁴ and the creation of physical *light* brought a change into that state.

▪ God's evaluation.

The expression "God saw that the light was good" is a human way of speaking and expresses the fact that God revealed to man that every part of his creation was "perfect", that is, "corresponding completely to his eternal decree (plan, will)".

▪ God's separation.

"God *separated (divided)*¹⁵ the light from the darkness". This expresses the fact that there are now two created realities in creation, which are clearly distinguishable: "darkness and light". The creation of physical "light" does not mean that there is no longer any physical "darkness". According to Genesis 1:2, there was *only* "darkness". After the creation of "light" there was *not only* "light", but "light and darkness". Wherever there is "darkness", there is no "light" and wherever there is "light", there is no "darkness". "Darkness" and "light" alternate with one another.

▪ God's naming.

"God *called*¹⁶ the light (i.e. the physical light shining) "*day*"¹⁷ and the darkness (i.e. the physical light interrupted) "*night*"¹⁸". According to the Babylonian view, the "naming" of things brought them into existence. But according to the

¹¹ Hebrew: tehom

¹² Hebrew: jehi

¹³ Hebrew: <or

¹⁴ Hebrew: choshek

¹⁵ Hebrew: Hiph. jabel, = badal

¹⁶ Hebrew: Kal jiqra<, = qara<

¹⁷ Hebrew: jom

¹⁸ Hebrew: lailah

Bible, the *things already existed before they were named!* By “naming” persons and things that already exist in the Bible, God makes them to be or to function as what their names express. For example, God named Abram “Abraham”, which means “the father of many nations” (Genesis 17:5) and that is what God made him. Thus, by naming the physical light “day” and the physical darkness “night”, God makes the two alternating entities of “physical light shining” and “physical light interrupted” to function as “day” and “night”.

▪ **God’s day.**

The forming of a creation day.

“And it became evening¹⁹, and it became morning²⁰ - (literally:) *one day*”. We translate “*the first day*”²¹, because it is followed by more creation days.” The first “morning” came into existence when God for the first time caused the physical light to shine. And the first “morning” came to an end when God for the first time interrupted the shining of physical light with darkness. Nevertheless, Genesis 1 does not say, “morning and evening” as in modern languages. The “evening” is *mentioned* first, because darkness had preceded the first period of shining light and every consecutive period of shining light. The first period of shining light only became “a complete creation day” when God interrupted that first period of shining light (also called “day”, in the sense of “daytime”) with the following period of darkness (called “an evening”)(verse 5a).

Thus, in the formula: “And it became evening, and it became morning” (verse 5b), the morning is *not the morning that followed the evening, but the morning that preceded the evening*. “The evening and the morning” denote the limits of “one of God’s creation days”, however in reversed order, because that was the way in which the Israelites were used to calculate their calendar days! While in Psalm 55:17 the Psalmist intends to say that he is crying to God “the whole day long”, he reverses the order of the words and says: “*Evening, morning and noon* I cry out in distress.” This **reversed order** (putting “evening” before “morning”) is maintained because the “days” in the Israelite calendar began at sundown (and not at midnight like the Roman calendar or at sunrise in popular language). That is why the order “there was evening, and there was morning” is maintained throughout the description of God’s six days of creation. Because more “days of God’s creation” would follow, we can best translate “one day” with “the first day”.

The duration of a creation day.

People have tried to determine the duration of “a day of God’s creation” by expressing it in terms of “our human time”. Many people are of the opinion that we may say that “a day of creation” is simply “a day of 24 hours”. This is not correct, because “a day of God’s creation” was limited by “an evening” and “a morning” in reversed order, that is, ***limited by the beginning and the end of the shining of light*** (i.e. *limited by the beginning of the morning and the end of the morning at the beginning of the evening*) while these people think of “a day of 24 hours” which includes approximately 12 hours of light and also 12 hours of darkness!

Moreover, when the first creation day was formed, “time” had not yet been created and “our way of measuring the length of time” did not yet exist! Our method of measuring the length of time was possible only from the fourth day of creation onwards, since on the fourth day of creation, the sun, moon and stars *began to function* “as signs to mark seasons and days and years” (Genesis 1:14).

Finally, the creation days of Genesis 1 are not “days of man”, but “days of God”. The method of calculating the “days of man” is dependent on the turning of the earth around its axle with respect to the sun, but has no validity with respect to God. Therefore, to try and calculate the length of the creation days will always remain a futile attempt!

The first creation day came into existence by God setting a limit to the duration of the shining light on that day. How these limits were brought about and how long the time-span was between the beginning and the end of this period of shining light, the Bible does not reveal. It would be presumptuous to force the modern meaning of the word “day” onto the text, when the text says nothing about how a creation day was brought into existence or how long a creation day lasted.

2. The second day of creation (Genesis 1:6-8).

▪ **God’s creative command and creative act.**

God said, “Let there be *an expanse*”²² *in the midst*”²³ of the waters and let there be *a separation*”²⁴ between water and water. And God *made* (effected, brought about, caused to exist, caused to occur, or caused to be)²⁵ the expanse ...” The word “expanse” is derived from a verb which means *to stretch out*²⁶.

¹⁹ Hebrew: wa-jehi >ereb

²⁰ Hebrew: wa-jehi boqer

²¹ Hebrew: jom echad

²² Hebrew: raqia

²³ Hebrew: betok

²⁴ Hebrew: mabdil

²⁵ Hebrew: Kal wa-ja>as, = >asah. Translated: made, effected, brought about, brought into existence, caused to exist, caused to occur, caused to be.

²⁶ Hebrew: Hiph. hirqia>, = raqa>

Genesis 1:6 contains *God's creative word* ("Let there be") and Genesis 1:7 contains *God's creative act* which executed God's creative word ("And God caused it to be"). "And it was so". *How* this was caused to be, is not revealed and *the substance of the expanse* is also not revealed.

▪ **God's evaluation.**

No evaluation is given.

▪ **God's separation.**

The "expanse" is put *in the midst* of the "water", that is, in the midst of the fluid mass of Genesis 1:2, in order to divide (separate) this fluid mass into two. Although people ply to translate "to separate the water above from the water below", Genesis 1:7 literally says, "And God *made (caused it to be)* the expanse and he *made a separation*²⁷ between the water which is *on the under part of* (with respect to) the expanse²⁸ and the water which is *on the upper part of* (with respect to) the expanse²⁹, and it was so." This does not mean that the lower part of water was *below* the expanse and the upper part of water was *above* the expanse. The expression can be understood to mean that from the perspective of the expanse, some water was on or at the lower part of the expanse and some water was on or at the upper part of the expanse³⁰. *How* God's creative act was brought about is not revealed! All we need to know is that this separation did not happen by itself, but was God's mighty creative act!

▪ **God's naming.**

"God called the expanse *sky*." By "naming" persons and things that already exist in the Bible, God makes them to be or causes them to function as what their names express. Thus, by naming the expanse "sky", God causes the expanse to function as the "sky".

The Hebrew word "*sky*"³¹ here has a more limited meaning than in Genesis 1:1, where it is translated by "heavens" and together with the earth represented the whole universe. Here the Hebrew word "shamajim" denotes what can be observed above us as a dome or ring of air or vapour which surrounds the earth and which we call "sky" or "atmosphere". One part of the water flood (fluid mass of the earth) was separated and was given a place in the form of an atmosphere (with clouds) on the upper part of the expanse. The water which is on the upper part of the expanse must be understood as the clouds, which consists of water in the form of vapour and comes down onto the earth in the form of rain (Job 36:27-28). There is absolutely no ground to assert that this is the same as the Babylonian notion of a solid dome (arch, canopy) of heaven punched with holes for stars. Psalm 104:2-4 and Isaiah 40:22 rather contend against the notion of *a solid canopy* of heaven than for it. The text also says nothing about the nature of the substance of the expanse. What we need to know is that what we observe as the "sky" or "atmosphere" came into existence as a mighty creative act of God.

▪ **God's day.**

"And it became evening, and it became morning - *the second day*"³². Remember the Israelite way of reversing the order of "evening and morning". After the interruption of the shining light on the first creation day (by the first evening), there followed a renewed shining of light (the second morning), which was again followed by the next interruption of shining light on the second creation day (by the second evening) and the next shining of light (the third morning). These "days" were "creation days", "days of God's mighty creative action". It is either futile or presumptuous to try and determine the length of these creation days in terms of our "days of man".

3. The third day of creation (Genesis 1:9-13).

▪ **God's first creative command and act on the third creation day (Genesis 1:9-10).**

God said, "Let the water *on the lower part of the sky*³³ *be gathered (collected)*³⁴ to one *place*³⁵ and let the *dry ground*³⁶ *appear*³⁷, and it was so".

▪ **God's separation.**

The second creation day spoke only of one part of the water flood (fluid mass of the earth), which was separated and was given its place in the form of an atmosphere (with clouds) on the upper part of the expanse. The third creation day now speaks of the other part of the water flood (fluid mass of the earth), which is separated into a fluid and a solid substance. No longer would the earth be just a fluid mass as in Genesis 1:2. By God's mighty creative word and act the

²⁷ Hebrew: Hiph. jabel, = badal

²⁸ Hebrew: *mi-tachat la-raqia*>

²⁹ Hebrew: *me-al la-raqia*>

³⁰ cf. 2 Chronicles 26:19, be-bet Yahweh *me-al le-mizbach ha-qitoret*, lit. in the house of the Lord *from the upper part of the altar of incense*", meaning not "above" but "*at the altar of incense*"

³¹ Hebrew: shamajim

³² Hebrew: jom sheni

³³ Hebrew: *mi-tachat ha-shamajim*

³⁴ Hebrew: Hiph. hiqwah, = qawah

³⁵ Hebrew: maqom

³⁶ Hebrew: jabashah

³⁷ Hebrew: Niph. tera<eh, ra<ah

water is drawn together and limited to one place so that the dry land appears. The waters of the oceans, seas and lakes receded to a lower altitude than the masses of land that emerged above them.

It is possible that the gradual cooling of the earth brought about condensation of water and that seismic pressure produced mountains. But the Bible does not say anything about this. *How* God's creative act was effected, is not revealed! All we need to know is that this separation did not happen by itself, but was God's mighty creative act!

▪ **God's naming.**

"God called the dry ground "*land*"³⁸, and the gathered waters he called "*seas*"³⁹. God caused the dry ground to function as "*land*" and the gathered waters to function as "*seas*".

The Hebrew word "erets" here has a more limited meaning than in Genesis 1:1, where it signified "the whole earth". Here it signifies "the land" of the continents only. The Hebrew word "jamim" is the so-called extensive plural indicating the extensive surface covered by the sea, which we also call with the extensive plural "oceans" today.

▪ **God's evaluation.**

"And God saw that it was good" expresses the fact that God revealed to man that also this part of his creation was "perfect", that is, "corresponding completely to his eternal decree (plan, will)".

▪ **God's second creative command and act on the third creation day (Genesis 1:11-12).**

And God said, "Let the earth *sprout (grow)*⁴⁰ *vegetation (grass, green herbage)*⁴¹, *plants (grass, herbs)*⁴² *sowing seed*⁴³, *fruit trees*⁴⁴ *making fruit*⁴⁵ *according to its kind*⁴⁶ which its seed (is) in itself on the earth, and it was so". The light of the first creation day and the water in the atmosphere of the second creation day made photosynthesis possible on the third creation day. By God's creative command, the dry land produced the various species of plants and trees. The revelation does not intend to give a scientific accurate classification of plants and trees, but only makes a difference between "seed-bearing plants" whose seeds are on the outside and "seed-bearing fruit trees" whose seeds are on the inside of its "fruit". Important is the fact that the different species did not evolve, but were created.

The specific extent of each species at the creation is not revealed. Definite species are mentioned in Genesis chapter 1: creatures in the sea, birds in the sky (Genesis 1:21), livestock, creeping creatures and wild animals (Genesis 1:24). Wild animals, livestock, creeping creatures and birds were included in the ark (Genesis 6:20; Genesis 7:14). And even a great number of birds, animals and creeping creatures are mentioned by name in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. This is a clear indication that God created a great variety of species in the world of flora on the third creation day.

"The earth *brought forth*⁴⁷ *vegetation, plants sowing seeds according to their kinds, and trees making fruit which has its seeds within according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good*" (Genesis 1:12). Notice that the seed of each fruit tree was in accordance with its own nature! Notice also that the earth did not bring forth vegetation by itself, but it did so only by the mighty creative word and action of God!

▪ **God's day.**

"And it became evening, and it became morning - *the third day*"⁴⁸. Once more there came an evening after the new morning. The third creation day distinguishes itself by two special creative actions of God: the separation of land and sea and the creation of vegetation on the land. The third day was also "a creation day", "a day of God's mighty creative action". It is either futile or presumptuous to try and determine the length of these creation days in terms of our "days of man".

4. The fourth day of creation (Genesis 1:14-19).

▪ **God's creative command and act.**

And God said, "Let there be *lights (luminaries)*⁴⁹, in the expanse of the sky⁵⁰ in order to make a separation between *the day*⁵¹ and between *the night*⁵² and let them be *for signs (symbols)*⁵³, and *for seasons*⁵⁴, and *for days and years*⁵⁵. And let them be for lights (luminaries) in the expanse of the sky *for shining*⁵⁶ on the earth".

³⁸ Hebrew: erets

³⁹ Hebrew: jamim

⁴⁰ Hebrew: Kal tadshe<, = dasha>

⁴¹ Hebrew: deshe<

⁴² Hebrew: >eseb

⁴³ Hebrew: mazria> zera>

⁴⁴ Hebrew: >ets peri

⁴⁵ Hebrew: ose> peri

⁴⁶ Hebrew: le-min-o

⁴⁷ Hebrew: Hiph. totsea<, = jatsa<

⁴⁸ Hebrew: jom shelishi

⁴⁹ Hebrew: meo<rot, = ma<or

⁵⁰ Hebrew: bi-rqi>a ha-shamajim

⁵¹ Hebrew: ha-jom

⁵² Hebrew: ha-lailah

⁵³ Hebrew: le-<otot, = <ot

⁵⁴ Hebrew: le-mo>edim, = mo>ed

“And it became thus⁵⁷. And God made (produced, brought about, effected, caused to be)⁵⁸ two great (large) lights (luminaries)⁵⁹: the larger⁶⁰ light to rule (have dominion over)⁶¹ the day and the smaller⁶² light to rule the night, and (he made) the stars⁶³. And God gave (put, set, appointed)⁶⁴ them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth. And to rule⁶⁵ in the day and in the night⁶⁶ and to make a separation between the light and the darkness”.

All these luminaries became thus, because God made (produced, brought about, effected, caused them to be) thus from the already existing substance (material, bodies) of the heavens.

▪ **The function, not the existence of the heavenly bodies.**

The heavenly bodies (luminaries) were not created on the fourth creation day as is clear from the fact that they were created “in the beginning” before the six creation days. The bodies of the sun, moon and stars were part of “the heavens”⁶⁷ (Genesis 1:1). As to their *substance*, they already existed before the six creation days.

But as to their *function* as luminaries, they came into existence only on the fourth creation day. God’s creative command was, “Let there be lights (luminaries)”, and God’s creative act was, “and he made⁶⁸ the already existing bodies of the sun, moon and stars (and the already existing light these bodies possessed) to be (to function as) *light-giving* bodies”. What God willed, he effected, that is, what he spoke, happened! While “light” already existed during each creation day, *the sun, moon and stars began to give light on the earth* only from the fourth creation day onwards (Genesis 1:15)! It is possible that there was no longer a thick layer of clouds around the earth so that the light from the sun, moon and stars could now reach the earth. The revelation states *that* they became light-giving bodies, not *in what way* they became light-bodies. For example, it does not say that the sun became a light-body in itself (a ball of fire consisting of molten materials and gasses) nor that the moon only reflects the light of the sun. The sun and moon are described as they can be observed by man from the earth. What is emphasised is the significance these heavenly bodies received as lights for the earth. In the beginning the heavenly bodies (“heavens”, Genesis 1:1) were *created* out of nothing. But only on the fourth creation day God made (i.e. caused) these heavenly bodies to function as light giving bodies that give light on earth by day (the sun) and by night (the moon and stars)(Genesis 1:15-16).

▪ **The relative light function, not the size of the heavenly bodies.**

The revelation describes these two heavenly bodies as they can be observed by man. The *greater* light (sun) and the *lesser* light (moon) are compared with respect to the strength of the light they give, and not with respect to their size (larger, smaller). The revelation says nothing about the actual proportions of the heavenly bodies!

▪ **The figurative function of the heavenly bodies.**

The expressions: “the sun *to rule* the day” and “the moon *to rule* the night” has no connection to the heathen view that the heavenly bodies are “rulers” or “gods”. The Bible condemns the worship of the heavenly bodies and condemns “astrology”, that is, the belief that the heavenly bodies exercise influence over man on earth (2 Kings 17:16-17; 2 Kings 23:5; Jeremiah 8:2; Jeremiah 43:13; Daniel 4:7; Acts 7:42-43). Instead, God is the Creator of the starry host, completely controls the movements of the stars and turns the messages of astrologers into nonsense (Isaiah 40:26; Job 38:31-33; Isaiah 44:24-26a)! The expression “to rule” is to be taken figuratively. Because the sun *shines* during the daytime, it figuratively *exercises dominion* during the daytime.

▪ **The human point of observation of the heavenly bodies.**

The words, “the expanse *of* the sky” does not mean that the expanse is a part of the sky. It is a double second case construction, meaning, “the expanse, that is, the sky”. “The luminaries *in* the expanse (sky)” does not suggest that all the luminaries in the universe (sun, moon and stars) are inside the expanse or that they are fixed to a so-called dome of the expanse. They are simply described as they can be observed in the sky by man on the earth and as man makes use of them. “God *put* (set, appointed) them in the expanse (sky) to give light on the earth” means that they form the background of the expanse (sky).

⁵⁵ Hebrew: le-jamim we-shanim

⁵⁶ Hebrew: Hiph. le-ha<ir, = <or

⁵⁷ Hebrew: wa-jehi ken

⁵⁸ Hebrew: wa-ja>as, = >asah

⁵⁹ Hebrew: ha-meo<rot ha-gedolim

⁶⁰ Hebrew: gadol

⁶¹ Hebrew: le-memshelet

⁶² Hebrew: qatan

⁶³ Hebrew: ha-kokabim

⁶⁴ Hebrew: Kal jiten, = natan

⁶⁵ Hebrew: Kal we-li-mshol, = mashal

⁶⁶ Hebrew: ba-jom u-ba-lailah

⁶⁷ Hebrew: ha-shamajim

⁶⁸ Hebrew: Kal ja>as, = >asah

▪ **God's separation.**

The lights (luminaries) serve to make a separation between “the day” and “the night”. The meaning of the words “day” and “night” in Genesis 1:14,16,18 must be different to the meaning of the words “day” and “night” in Genesis 1:4-5, because otherwise there would be an inconsistency, namely, that originally the separation between “day” and “night” was made *by God* on the first creation day and later the same separation between “day” and “night” was made *by the heavenly bodies* on the fourth creation day! Evidently the words “day” and “night” in Genesis 1:14,16,18 have a different meaning than the words “day” and “night” in Genesis 1:4-5.

In Genesis 1:4-5, “the day” was “a creation day”, “a day of God’s mighty creative action” in which God created light and the light shined until God interrupted the shining light with the night. The “night” was not considered a part of “the creation day”. “The day” and “the night” were “days and nights of God”. The length or duration of “the creation days” and “the following nights” were determined solely by God’s creative commands and acts. They were days and nights that have reference only to God, not to the sun. Therefore, the length or duration of the creation days and the following nights cannot be calculated by man.

In Genesis 1:14.16.18, “the day” and “the night” clearly refer to “days and nights of man”. The length or duration of these “days” and the following “nights” are determined by the rotation of the earth around its axle with respect to the sun. They are days and nights that have reference only to the sun. They are the product of God’s creative activity on the fourth creation day. Therefore, the length or duration of these days and nights can be calculated by man (to be 24 hours, the time it takes for the earth to rotate around its axle with respect to the sun). The “night” is a part (about 12 hours) of an ordinary (24 hour) “day”.

▪ **The lights (luminaries) have three distinct functions:**

The lights are for *signs (symbols)*⁶⁹. Some interpreted this as “astrology”, but this is severely condemned in the Bible (See the figurative function of the heavenly bodies above). The best interpretation is that the luminaries serve as *means of orientation during travelling*, especially by sea. They are stellar signs that aid travelling.

The lights are for *seasons*⁷⁰. Some think of the Jewish festivals, but that was not yet an issue at the creation. The best interpretation is that the luminaries served as *means of determining the seasons* of sowing and harvesting. They serve the agricultural calendar of the seasons.

The lights are for *days and years*⁷¹. The luminaries serve as *means to regulate the historical calendar*, of days, months and years.

The lights (luminaries) anticipate the existence of man. They are described in terms of their functions for man on earth! Thus, the creation days prepared the earth to receive man!

▪ **God's evaluation.**

“And God saw that it was good” expresses the fact that God revealed to man that also this part of his creation was “perfect”, that is, “corresponding completely to his eternal decree (plan, will)”.

▪ **God's day.**

“And it became evening, and it became morning - *the fourth day*”⁷². Although *for the earth* a specific manner of dividing time had become a reality, *for God* “the fourth creation day” remained the same as the previous creation days. There is not the slightest indication that the fourth creation day was different from the previous creation days or that it must be regarded as a 24 hour day. We must regard all the creation days in the same manner. Thus, the fourth day was also “a creation day”, “a day of God’s mighty creative action”. It is either futile or presumptuous to try and determine the length of these creation days in terms of our “days of man”.

5. The fifth day of creation (Genesis 1:20-23).

▪ **God's first creative command and act on the fifth creation day (Genesis 1:20-21).**

God said, “Let the waters *swarm (teem)*⁷³ with a *swarm*⁷⁴ of *living beings (having breath of life)*⁷⁵, and *winged creatures*⁷⁶ that *fly*⁷⁷ *above the earth*⁷⁸ *across the expanse (sky)*⁷⁹.” “The waters teems with swarms of living beings” is a general expression which includes all kinds of living things in the waters, like the great sea creatures, fish, shellfish, crabs and shrimps, etc. “Winged creatures” is another general term which includes all kinds of flying creatures, like birds, flying lizards, insects, etc.

⁶⁹ Hebrew: le-<otot, = <ot

⁷⁰ Hebrew: le-mo>edim, = mo>ed

⁷¹ Hebrew: le-jamim we-shanim

⁷² Hebrew: rebi>i

⁷³ Hebrew: Kal jishretsu, = sharats

⁷⁴ Hebrew: sherets

⁷⁵ Hebrew: nefesh chajah

⁷⁶ Hebrew: we->of

⁷⁷ Hebrew: Pi. je>ofef, = >ofef

⁷⁸ Hebrew: al ha-arets

⁷⁹ Hebrew: al pene reqi>a ha-shamajim

And God *created*⁸⁰ *the great sea-creatures*⁸¹ and everything that has the breath of life, that *creeps (crawls, swarms)*⁸², that swarms (teems) the water, *according to their kinds*⁸³, and *every winged bird*⁸⁴ according to its kind.” They point to a great variety of swimming and flying creatures. “The great sea creatures”⁸⁵ represent different creatures in the Old Testament: a serpent (snake)(Exodus 7:9-12; Deuteronomy 32:33; Psalm 91:13), a dragon (Jeremiah 51:34), a crocodile (Ezekiel 29:3-4; 32:2), or generally great sea creatures that dwell in the seas (Psalm 148:7; Job 7:12). Both sea creatures and flying creatures were created according to their kind. This is a clear indication that God created a great variety of species in the swimming and flying world on the fifth creation day. Right from the beginning there was a great variety.

It is interesting that the “Cambrian period” of geology⁸⁶ shows the first evidence of invertebrate animal life (lacking backbone or spinal column) *with startling suddenness!* There is no record whatever of the 5 000 species of marine and terrestrial animal life of the “Palaeozoic era” prior to the Cambrian levels of fossil bearing strata!

▪ **God’s second creative command on the fifth creation day (Genesis 1:22-23).**

And God blessed⁸⁷ them saying, “*Be fruitful*⁸⁸ and *multiply (increase in number)*⁸⁹, and *fill (to make full)*⁹⁰ the water in the seas, and let the birds increase⁹¹ on the earth.”

This command should not be understood as spoken *to* these creatures, but as God’s blessing pronounced *over* these creatures. His creative command blesses these creatures with the ability to multiply and increase in number.

▪ **God’s evaluation.**

“And God saw that it was good” expresses the fact that God revealed to man that also this part of his creation was “perfect”, that is, “corresponding completely to his eternal decree (plan, will)”.

▪ **God’s day.**

“And there was evening, and there was morning - *the fifth day*”⁹². The fifth day was also “a creation day”, “a day of God’s mighty creative action”. It is either futile or presumptuous to try and determine the length of these creation days in terms of our “days of man”.

6. The sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:24-31).

▪ **God’s first creative command and act on the sixth creation day (Genesis 1:24-25).**

And God said, “Let *the land*⁹³ bring forth (*produce*)⁹⁴ (cf. Genesis 1:12) *living creatures*⁹⁵ according to their kinds: *domestic animals (livestock)*⁹⁶, *creeping things (reptiles)*⁹⁷, and *living things of the earth (wild animals)*⁹⁸ according its kind.”

“Let the land bring forth (produce)” should not be understood to mean that the earth had the ability to produce animals all by itself. By God’s creative command and act, he created life itself and all these living animals from the elements present in the earth. This is in accord with the whole of Genesis chapter 1: “In the beginning” God *created*⁹⁹ the substance (material, dust) of “the heavens and the earth”, which was still empty, formless, in fluid state and dark (Genesis 1:1-2). And “in the six creation days” he *made*¹⁰⁰ or *produced*¹⁰¹ or *formed (fashioned)*¹⁰² the present world which is no longer empty, formless, in fluid state or dark. Instead it is inhabited by living plants and trees, living birds and fish, living animals and insects and living man (Genesis 1:3-31).

The domestic animals include livestock such as sheep, goats and cattle. *The creeping things* include all animals that live low to the ground or move along the ground. *The living things of the earth*¹⁰³ does not include the notion of predators

⁸⁰ Hebrew: wa-jibra<, = bara<

⁸¹ Hebrew: ha-tanimim ha-gedolim

⁸² Hebrew: ramash

⁸³ Hebrew: le-minehem

⁸⁴ Hebrew: kol >of kanaf

⁸⁵ Hebrew: ha-tanimim ha-gedolim

⁸⁶ The Cambrian period was the earliest palaeozoic period (600 000 000 to 480 000 000 years ago)

⁸⁷ Hebrew: Pi. wa-jebarek, = barak

⁸⁸ Hebrew: Kal peru, = parah

⁸⁹ Hebrew: Kal rebu, = rabah

⁹⁰ Hebrew: Pi. mil<u, = mile<

⁹¹ Hebrew: Pi. jireb, = ribah

⁹² Hebrew: jom chemishi

⁹³ Hebrew: ha-arets

⁹⁴ Hebrew: Hiph. totse<, = hotsi<

⁹⁵ Hebrew: nefesh chajah

⁹⁶ Hebrew: behemah

⁹⁷ Hebrew: remes

⁹⁸ Hebrew: we-chaito <erets, = chajah, chajat, chaito, chajot

⁹⁹ Hebrew: bara<

¹⁰⁰ Hebrew: >asah

¹⁰¹ Hebrew: Hiph. hotsi<

¹⁰² Hebrew: jatsar

¹⁰³ Hebrew: chajah, chajat, chaito, chajot

(compare Genesis 1: 30 with Genesis 9:2-4), but is used everywhere else in the Old Testament to denote *the larger wild animals* in contrast to the domestic animals.

Like in Genesis 1:12, God's revelation did not intend to give a precise scientific classification of animals, but simply described the animals in the way people observed them. God's revelation certainly revealed that in each of these three groups of animals there existed by God's will a great variety of species from the very time of their creation.

"And it became thus¹⁰⁴. And God made¹⁰⁵ the living things of the earth (wild animals) according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creeping things (reptiles) on the ground¹⁰⁶ according to their kinds." All these animals became thus, because God made (effected, formed, fashioned, caused it to be) thus.

▪ **God's second creative command and act on the sixth creation day (Genesis 1:26-28).**

And God said, "Let us make¹⁰⁷ man¹⁰⁸ according to our own image (semblance)¹⁰⁹ according to our likeness (resemblance)¹¹⁰ and rule over (have dominion, subdue, subjugate)¹¹¹ the fish¹¹² of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over all the creeping things (reptiles) that creep over the earth¹¹³."

▪ **God's plurality.**

God's deliberation reveals the special significance given to the creation of man. Very special consideration is given to the creation of man.

Some learned men think that the plural "us" is a remainder of an original pantheon of gods. This is however incorrect, because the whole revelation of the creation is strictly monotheistic ("God said" and "God acted")! Other people think that God deliberated the creation of man with angels. This is also incorrect, because nowhere in the Bible do we find the notion that man was created in the image of angels. It also cannot be a so-called "majestic plural" of God, because the so-called majestic plural is not found in the Hebrew language. It is first found in the letter of the Persian king Artaxerxes (464-423 B.C.), which was written in Aramaic (Ezra 4:18; cf. Ezra 7:14). The best interpretation is that this plural "us" is the first revelation in the Bible that there exists in the unity of the divine nature a plurality or diversity, as is also clear from the words "God" and "the Spirit" in Genesis 1:1-2.

▪ **Man's resemblance to God.**

God created man "according to"¹¹⁴ his image is further explained by "as"¹¹⁵ his likeness, meaning that the person is indeed what is expressed by "as" (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:7). There is no difference between the words "image"¹¹⁶ and "likeness"¹¹⁷ as Genesis 1:27 (only "image") and Genesis 5:1 (only "likeness") proves. The word "image" expresses that there is in man such a resemblance to God as there exists between a person and an image made of that person. The word "likeness" expresses that the resemblance between the copy and the original is accurate. This does not mean that there is no fundamental and incomparable *difference* between God and man. However, here the *resemblance* is revealed and emphasised in order to reveal the high value God has accorded to man.

"And God created¹¹⁸ the man¹¹⁹ in his image, in the image of God he created him, male¹²⁰ and female¹²¹ he created them.

▪ **God's unity.**

Here the singular of God is used, proving that the plurality or diversity within the divine nature in no sense whatever diminishes the unity of the divine nature!

▪ **Man's difference as to sex.**

It does not mean "man" and "woman", but "male sex" and "female sex". Thus the blessing given to the living creatures in Genesis 1:22 must have included their being created with different sexes, even if it is not mentioned there. The two different sexes of mankind are expressly mentioned in order to prepare mankind for the very special way God intended the two different sexes to relate to one another, namely in holy matrimony (Genesis chapter 2:18-24). While God spoke his blessing *over* the living creatures, he spoke his blessing *to* mankind! Genesis 1:28 is the very first revelation of God

¹⁰⁴ Hebrew: wa-jehi ken

¹⁰⁵ Hebrew: wa-ja>as

¹⁰⁶ Hebrew: kol remes ha->edamah

¹⁰⁷ Hebrew: Kal na<eseh, = >asah

¹⁰⁸ Hebrew: <adam

¹⁰⁹ Hebrew: be-tsalmenu, = tselem

¹¹⁰ Hebrew: ki-demutenu, = demut

¹¹¹ Hebrew: Kal we-jirdu, = radah

¹¹² Hebrew: bi-dgat, = dagah

¹¹³ Hebrew: ha-romes al ha-<arets

¹¹⁴ Hebrew: be

¹¹⁵ Hebrew: ki

¹¹⁶ Hebrew: tselem

¹¹⁷ Hebrew: demut

¹¹⁸ Hebrew: wa-jibera<

¹¹⁹ Hebrew: et-ha->adam

¹²⁰ Hebrew: zakar

¹²¹ Hebrew: u-neqebah

to man, the very first communication between God and man. God created man with the ability to respond (speak) to him.

▪ **God's creative blessing and commission.**

And God blessed them, saying to them, “*Be fruitful and multiply (increase in number), and fill the earth*¹²² (cf. Genesis 1:22), and *tread down (subdue, preserve, pickle, detain, suppress)*¹²³ (the earth), and *rule over (have dominion, subdue, subjugate)*¹²⁴ the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over *all living creatures that creep (move) on the earth*¹²⁵”.

▪ **Man's task and goal.**

God gave man the task to rule over God's works in subjection to God (Psalm 8:6-8). His task is to subdue the earth and to rule over the animals.

▪ **God's injunction with regard to food.**

And God said, “Look, I have given you *all the plants that sow seeds*¹²⁶ on the face of the whole earth, and *every tree in which is the fruit of a tree sowing seed*¹²⁷, for you it will be for *food*¹²⁸. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, and all the creatures that move on the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - (I give) every *green plant*¹²⁹ for food. And it became thus”.

While God gave to man all the seed bearing plants and all the fruit bearing trees which fruit have seeds within to eat, he gave to the animals only the seed bearing plants and especially the green that sprouts from them to eat. After the flood, God also gave the animals for food to man (Genesis 9:3). Whatever God willed and ordained, happened.

▪ **God's evaluation (Genesis 1:25, 31).**

“And God saw all that he had *made*¹³⁰ and *see (behold)*¹³¹ it was *very good*¹³²! God calls man to *look at his creation and see how perfect* he has made it (cf. Psalm 19:1-6; Psalm 104; Romans 1:20)! God revealed to man that also this part of his creation was “perfect”, that is, “corresponding completely to his eternal decree (plan, will)”.

▪ **God's day.**

“And it was evening, and it was morning - *the sixth day*”¹³³. The sixth day was also “a creation day”, “a day of God's mighty creative action”. It is either futile or presumptuous to try and determine the length of these creation days in terms of our “days of man”.

On the sixth creation day God created man, both male and female after he had created all the animals (Genesis 1:27). This was God's closing act on the sixth creation day.

But a considerable interval of time must have intervened between the creation of Adam and the creation of Eve (Genesis 2:7-22). Before the creation of Eve, Adam's task was to cultivate and protect the garden in the region of Eden. God's decision to make a suitable helper for Adam implies a long enough period of time to lose his initial excitement at working in the garden. To compensate for his lonesomeness, God gave Adam the enormous task of classifying every species of animal and bird. This comprehensive inventory of all animals, birds and insects must have taken a very long time. Finally, after Adam's renewed loneliness, God created a wife for him from that part of his body that was closest to his heart. Therefore Genesis 1:31 never intended to teach that the sixth creation day lasted a mere 24 hours!

The purpose of Genesis chapter 1 is *not* to tell *how fast* God performed his work of creation, but to reveal that the universe was *indeed created*, that it was *created by God*, and that it was *created for man*!

Summary of creation (Genesis 2:1).

▪ **The creation was created complete.**

“Thus¹³⁴ were *being completed (finished)*¹³⁵ the heavens and the earth and its entire *host (vast array)*¹³⁶. Genesis 2:1 summarises all God's creative works from *the creation* of the universe (including earth) in Genesis 1:1-2 to *the completion* of his creation in the six creation days in Genesis 1:3-31. It summarises God's creation of all substances (energy, matter, space and time) in the universe as well as God's forming and ordering of these substances into the

¹²² Hebrew: peru u-rebu u-mil<u et ha-arets

¹²³ Hebrew: Kal we-kibshuha, = kabash

¹²⁴ Hebrew: Kal u-redu, = radah

¹²⁵ Hebrew: kol chajah ha-romeset al ha-arets

¹²⁶ Hebrew: kol >eseb zore>a zera

¹²⁷ Hebrew: kol ha-ets <esher bo peri ets zore>a zera

¹²⁸ Hebrew: le-<aklah

¹²⁹ Hebrew: jereq >eseb

¹³⁰ Hebrew: >asah

¹³¹ Hebrew: hineh

¹³² Hebrew: tob me<od

¹³³ Hebrew: jom ha-shishi

¹³⁴ Hebrew: and

¹³⁵ Hebrew: Pu. jekulu, = kalah

¹³⁶ Hebrew: kol tseba<am, = tsaba<

present inhabited and organised universe, with all its vast differences. While Genesis 1:2 speaks of the earth as still empty, formless, dark and in fluid state, Genesis 2:1 speaks of the earth, that is, of everything in and on the earth, as completed in every respect!

God did not simply create a great number of possibilities which as time passed developed into all the present forms (called: evolution), but God created the earth together with its vast array *complete*. He created the earth, together with all its different forms of continents, lands and seas and everything in and on it complete, however, without revealing God's method or process of creating! Note, while the Bible speaks of the land separated from the sea, it reveals nothing about the shape of the land at that time. While the Bible speaks of the different species as created right from the beginning, it reveals nothing about how they specifically looked. While the Bible says that God created man and woman in his image right from the beginning, it does not say anything about their race, outward appearance, culture or language. But the Bible does teach that God made every nation of men "*from one*" (i.e. Adam)(Acts 17:26)! God created the earth complete with its different seasons functioning and with humans living and working and multiplying on it.

▪ **The creation was created full-grown.**

Without revealing the method or process of creation and the "time" it took, God revealed that he created the universe full grown, in the sense that the created things functioned as they function today. Full-grown plants had the ability to bear seeds and multiply from the third creation day onwards (Genesis 1:11-12). The light of the stars reached the earth from the fourth creation day onwards (Genesis 1:15). Fish, birds and animals (Genesis 1:20,24) were fruitful and had the ability to multiply from the fifth and sixth creation days onwards (Genesis 1:22). Man and the woman were created as full-grown individuals who had the blessing and physical ability to be fruitful and multiply and the spiritual ability to communicate with God and fulfil God's commission from the sixth creation day onwards (Genesis 1:27-28).

▪ **The creation was created with many possibilities as well.**

God's powerful creative word gave plants, trees, fish, birds, animals and mankind the ability to be fruitful and multiply. God's blessing and command gave mankind the ability to communicate with God and to subdue the earth and rule over the works of God in submission to God. The created world moves towards *a history* in relationship to God's works, in relation to one another and in relation to God and God's Word. But that history is related in the rest of the Bible.

7. The seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3).

▪ **The creation completed on the seventh or the sixth day (Genesis 2:2a)?**

Literally: "And God finished (completed)¹³⁷ on the seventh day¹³⁸ his work (occupation, employment)¹³⁹ which he made¹⁴⁰."

This sentence causes difficulty for interpreters, because God finished (completed) his creation work of the *sixth* creation day (Genesis 2:1), not on the *seventh*. The translations: Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek Septuagint and the Syrian text all have "sixth" instead of "seventh", but this does not explain how "sixth" could have changed into "seventh" in the Hebrew text.

It is no help to explain it by means of a declarative sentence: "On the seventh day, God *declared that he completed* his work." The best explanation is to regard *the imperfect tense (past tense) of the verb*, as is quite possible according to Hebrew grammar, as a *pluperfect past tense* (a more than completed past tense): Because God *completed* his work of creation *on the sixth creation day, the completion of his creation work is already a past reality on the seventh day*, and can be said, "God had (already) completed (his work of creation) on the seventh day".

▪ **The divine resting day in the Old Testament (Genesis 2:2b).**

"And he *ceased (rested)¹⁴¹* on the seventh day from all his work which he made." The Hebrew word "shabat" means to cease, to rest.

On the one hand, it is logic to regard the seventh day like one of the creation days, which were working days. On the other hand, many view the seventh day as an ordinary human day, either of 24 hours or from sunrise to sunset. But the question arises whether the divine rest *ended* after this seventh day (whether as long as a creation day or as short as a human day)?

God's resting continues ever since the creation! For mankind, after a day of rest, there always follows another series of six working days. For God however, after his six creation days, there follows only one resting day and no more other creation (working) days thereafter! Moreover, in contrast to the six creation days, which ended with the statement, "and it was evening, and it was morning", God's seventh day began with "a morning", but does not have "an evening", because it is still continuing uninterrupted! The Bible does not teach that God rested for the duration of one creation day or for only one 24 hour day at the conclusion of his creative work. There is no closing formula for the seventh day!

¹³⁷ Hebrew: Pi. wa-jekal, killah = to complete, finish; Kal kalah = to be complete, completed, finished

¹³⁸ Hebrew: ba-jom ha-shebi>i (seventh), Greek: en te hemera te hekte (sixth)

¹³⁹ Hebrew: mela<kto, = mela<kah

¹⁴⁰ Hebrew: >asah

¹⁴¹ Hebrew: Kal wa-jishbot, = shabat

God's resting is not like one of the creation days, with an end to its period. God had six creation days, followed by one day of rest, upon which no more creation days followed!

This does not mean that God's resting should be understood as absolute idleness. God's "resting" is contrasted with God's "creation". Therefore "resting" does not mean that God is tired and needs a rest, but means "God had completed his work of creation and there would be no more creation". But "no more creating" does not mean complete idleness. In other parts of the Bible we read that from moment to moment God continues to uphold and rule his work of creation (This is called: God's providence). Genesis 2:2-3 is therefore not in conflict with John 5:17, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working".

▪ **The divine rest in the New Testament.**

The New Testament teaches that this seventh day has continued right into the Church Age as "God's rest" The Greek word used for "rest" is "katapausis"¹⁴².

The rest from enemies.

The Old Testament speaks of entering Canaan as entering the place where God would give the Israelites "rest"¹⁴³ from all their enemies. There they would live in safety (Deuteronomy 12:9-10). After Joshua (1497-1387 B.C.) led the people of Israel into Canaan, God gave them "rest" on every side from their enemies (Joshua 21:44).

The rest which God himself enjoys.

Later, however, God spoke through David (reigned: 1011-971 B.C.) about another "rest", namely "God's rest". Because the Israelites rebelled against God for 40 years in the desert, disobeying his voice and hardening their hearts, God warned them: "They shall never enter *my rest*" (Psalm 95:11). The Hebrew uses the word "menuchah" and the Greek katapausis mou". The Hebrew word "menuchah" or the Greek word "katapausis" is *the rest* which God himself enjoys. God promises his obedient people a share in that rest which he himself enjoys and threatens the disobedient with foregoing that rest!

God's rest in the Letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 4)(before 64 A.D.) is connected to God's rest in Genesis 2. "God's work has been finished since the creation of the world"¹⁴⁴ (Hebrews 4:3) and "On the seventh day God rested from all his work"¹⁴⁵ (Hebrews 4:4). The New Testament writer of the Letter to the Hebrews argues that if Joshua had given the Israelites rest, God would not have spoken later about another day of rest. Therefore he proves that there still remains "a Sabbath-rest"¹⁴⁶ for the people of God (Hebrews 4:8-9). The Greek word "sabbatismos" is derived from the Hebrew word "shabat".

In Genesis 2:2-3 the Hebrew word "shabat"¹⁴⁷ is used and in Exodus 20:11 a different Hebrew word "menuchah"¹⁴⁸ is used. But both words are translated with in the Greek Old Testament with the Greek word "katapausis"¹⁴⁹ and mean *to cease or to rest*. And "the rest" (katapausis) which God himself enjoys is also described with the word "Sabbath-rest" (sabbatismos). God promises his people in the Old and in the New Testament a share in that Sabbath rest which he himself enjoys since the completion of creation forever!

Thus, when the people of God have finished their appointed work on earth in accordance with God's will, they will also enter into God's rest (Hebrews 4:9). This "Sabbath rest" of the people of God refers to the life in God's presence either immediately after death in heaven or after the resurrection on the new earth. I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on". "Yes", says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them" (Revelation 14:13-14).

When will God's people enjoy God's rest?

People can only enter "the rest of God" by hearing and believing the gospel (Hebrews 3:15; Hebrews 4:2-3a). In the light of Hebrews 11:39-40, the Old Testament believers would only together with New Testament believers be made perfect, and this may mean that they entered God's rest in heaven as soon as Christ had accomplished his redemptive work. But in the light of Ecclesiastes 12:7 and Matthew 22:31-32, it is not very clear where the believers of the Old Testament were before Christ's crucifixion.

In the light of Luke 23:43, Philippians 1:23, Hebrews 12:42-44, the New Testament believers are experiencing the rest of God *in heaven* (the New Jerusalem in heaven) immediately after death. In the light of Revelation 6:11, the New Testament believers, too, have to wait until the number of their fellow servants and brothers who have to be killed as they have been, was completed, and this means that they will only enter and experience the rest of God *on the new earth* (the New Jerusalem on the new earth) at the general resurrection of the dead.

¹⁴² καταπαυσις

¹⁴³ Hebrew: menuchah, Greek: katapausis

¹⁴⁴ Greek: καιτοι (and yet) των εργαων απο καταβολης κοσμου γενηθεντων

¹⁴⁵ Greek: και κατεπαυσεν ο θεος εν τη ημερα τη εβδομη απο παντων των εργαων αυτου

¹⁴⁶ Greek: sabbatismos

¹⁴⁷ Hebrew: shabat

¹⁴⁸ Hebrew: Kal wa-janach, = nucha (cf. menuchah)

¹⁴⁹ Greek: κατεπαυσεν (katapausen)

In one way or another, the blessed rest of unbroken fellowship with God is the goal to which the people of God are urged to press forward: “Make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by their example of disobedience” (Hebrews 4:11).

▪ **The human resting day (Genesis 2:3).**

“And God *blessed*¹⁵⁰ the seventh day and he *sanctified*¹⁵¹ it, because on it he *rested*¹⁵² from all his work which God *created*¹⁵³ and *made*¹⁵⁴.”

In the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) the motivation for celebrating the Sabbath, the human resting day, is brought in the closest connection with God’s creation of the world in six creation days and God’s resting on the divine seventh day, the divine resting day. Likewise in the seventh creation day (Genesis 2:3) the motivation for blessing and sanctifying the seventh day, the human resting day, is brought in the closest connection with God’s resting day after his six creation days. There can be no doubt that “the seventh day” in Genesis 2:3 is a reference to *the human resting day* and not to the divine resting day. While “the seventh day” in Genesis 2:2 is a reference to *the divine resting day*, in Genesis 2:3 it is a reference to *the human resting day*! “Blessing” and “sanctifying” are actions that belong to the sphere of human life.

The argument, that because Genesis 2:3 deals with the human resting day Genesis 2:2 must also deal with the human resting day of 24 hours, cannot be maintained in the light of other changes in the meaning of words in Genesis chapter 1. While in Genesis 1:1, the word “heaven” means “the universe”, in Genesis 1:8 it means “the sky”. While in Genesis 1:1-2 the word “earth” means “the planet earth”, in Genesis 1:10 it means “the dry land (continents)”. Thus, when the text itself shows that a particular word needs to be understood in another meaning, we must simply accept that! Likewise, Genesis 2:2 is speaking of *God’s resting* and Genesis 2:3 of *man’s resting*.

The inspired writer, who recorded the revelation of God’s history of creation in what became “the Book of Genesis”, took “the seventh day” as a *weekly* “human day of rest” for granted. He and his readers were already enjoying the blessings of that resting day. Inspired by God’s Spirit he points out that the blessing and sanctification of the human resting day is closely connected to the divine resting day after creation.

E. THE PURPOSE OF GENESIS 1.

The purpose of Genesis chapter 1 is “who”, “what”, “for whom”, “why” and NOT “how long”.

1. The purpose of Genesis 1 is “who” created everything?

The purpose of the revelation of the history of creation in Genesis 1 is to tell *who* created the universe. The purpose of Genesis 1 is to reveal that “JaHWeH” (the Hebrew word for “the LORD”), the God who reveals himself in the Bible, is indeed the only true God and the Creator of all things that exist. This stood in opposition to the religious notions of the heathen nations around them. They assumed the emergence of a host (pantheon) of jealous and quarrelling gods in successive stages out of pre-existent matter of unknown origin, actuated by unexplained forces. The Bible rejects all the theories of origin of the universe of the pagan cultures of the ancient world as nothing but baseless superstition. The creation does not emerge from primeval matter and also not from “nothing”. The creation originates from GOD! The LORD God Almighty existed before all matter. He existed from all eternity and to all eternity (Psalm 90:2). By his own word of command God brought the entire physical universe into existence out of nothing (Psalm 33:6,9; Hebrews 11:3; Romans 4:17; 2 Peter 3:5) and always keeps the whole universe under his sovereign control (Hebrews 1:3).

2. The purpose of Genesis 1 is “what” did God create?

The purpose of the revelation of the history of creation in Genesis 1 is to tell *what* God created. He created the whole universe, with all its uncountable galaxies and stars. He created the planet earth with its atmosphere in which life exists, its continents of land amidst the oceans, its great variety of plants and trees on the land, its great variety of species of flying creatures in the air, swimming creatures in the seas and land creatures on the continents, and mankind.

Just consider some aspects of what God created.

¹⁵⁰ Hebrew: Pi. wa-jebarek, = birek

¹⁵¹ Hebrew: Pi wa-jeqadesh, = qidesh

¹⁵² Hebrew: Kal shabat

¹⁵³ Hebrew: Kal bara<

¹⁵⁴ Hebrew: la->esot, = >asah

▪ **God created the greatest thinkable things in the universe (the stars) (Isaiah 40:25-26).**

The number of the stars¹⁵⁵

On a clear and dark night a man can see about six thousand (6000) stars with his naked eye. Most of them belong to our galaxy, called 'the Milky Way', which contains about one hundred milliard (100 000 000 000) (11 zero's) stars.

By means of the greatest telescopes man can see more than ten thousand trillion (10 000 000 000 000 000 000) (22 zero's) stars and about one hundred milliard (100 000 000 000) (11 zero's) galaxies like the Milky Way. The number of stars in the universe is so great that no one can count them in his whole lifetime.

The distances of the stars.

The only star in the solar system is the sun and it is the closest star to earth. The distance to the sun is 150 million kilometres. Just how far is that? Flying by plane to the sun at 1000 kilometres per hour would take you 17 years.

The distances to the stars are so immense that scientists use 'a light year' to indicate the distance. Light is the fastest phenomenon known to man. The speed of light is about three hundred thousand kilometres (300 000) per second. That equals 7½ times around the earth in one second! 'A light year' is the distance light travels during one year. One light year equals a distance of nine-and-a-half billion (9 454 000 000 000) kilometres!

The moon is one and a third light second away. The planet Mars is 5 light minutes away. The sun is 8 light minutes away. The planet Pluto is five light hours away. The star closest to the solar system is 4.3 light years away. Flying by plane to this star would take four and a half million (4 644 000) years!

Our galaxy, the Milky Way, has a diameter of about hundred-and-twenty thousand (120 000) light years! The galaxy closest to our galaxy is called Spiral Nebula N-1. It consists of billions of stars and the distance to it is more than one million light years! The furthest stars are milliards of light years separated from us! Astronomers estimate that the furthest measured distance in the universe is plus minus seventeen milliard (17 000 000 000) light years!

Man will never be able to conquer the universe!

The sizes of the stars.

Our planet earth has a diameter of 12 756 kilometres. The diameter of the sun is 109 times that of the earth. There are stars that have a diameter 100 and even 1000 times that of the sun! The size of a super blue giant star is so great that the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars could rotate with ease inside such a star!

If the diameter of the earth could be represented by 1 millimetre, then in comparison the diameter of the sun would be 11 centimetres and that of a super blue giant star 110 metres!

The greatness and power of God.

People can observe and study the stars with telescopes. But who created the greatest things in the universe known to man? The Bible reveals that God created the stars, controls their movements and even gives to each star a name (Isaiah 40:25-26)! God says "It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshalled their starry hosts" (Isaiah 45:12).

If man cannot fathom the number, the distances and sizes of the stars, how could man then fathom the existence, being (nature) and greatness of God? The existence of the stars point every night to the existence of a great and powerful God!

▪ **God created the smallest thinkable things on earth.**

Consider some small things inside man:

Cells.

The human body contains an uncountable number of cells. One kilogramme of your body weight contains about two billion (2 000 000 000 000) cells! Each cell contains 10 very tiny power stations that produce all the energy needed for the body to function in work and even in top sport! Every power station is smaller than 1 micrometre (one thousandth of a millimetre)! These power stations are so tiny and yet they produce so much energy!

Lungs.

The human lungs consist of a great number of tiny air-sacs (alveoli). Scientists estimate that there are more than six hundred million (600 000 000) air-sacs built into your lungs. The walls of these air-sacs contain tiny blood vessels that absorb the oxygen in the air into the bloodstream and transport these to every part of the body. The walls of these air-sacs are so artfully folded into the small space of the lungs that when unfolded they cover a football field!

By means of microscopes we can observe these cells and air-sacs. But WHO created such tiny organisms?

¹⁵⁵ million (British + American) = 6 zero's
milliard (American: billion) = 9 zero's (a thousand million)
billion (American: trillion) = 12 zero's (a million million)
billiard (American: quadrillion) = 15 zero's (a million milliard)
trillion (American: quintillion) = 18 zero's (million million million)

God is the Creator of the smallest thinkable things on earth – even in man. Every Christian should proclaim: “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:14).

When one thinks about how fantastic God has created the human body, that it continues to grow and renew itself, one can only be amazed. If the created piece of art – the human body – is so wonderful, how much more wonderful is the Creator of the body?

3. The purpose of Genesis 1 is “for whom” did God create?

The purpose of the revelation of the history of creation in Genesis 1 is to tell *for whom* God created the universe. God created the earth for man!

- **God created the sun, moon and stars for the benefit of man.**

He created the various constellations of the stars for “signs or symbols or indicators” to show man the direction in travelling, especially at sea. He created the sun and moon to mark the agricultural “seasons” and to divide “calendar time” into days, months and years. Thus man could mark events in human history (Genesis 1:14).

- **God created plants and trees as food for man.**

God created the seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees as food *for man* (Genesis 1:29)(and animals).

- **God created the earth for man.**

“The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man” (Psalm 115:16). God created the earth and all its fullness *for man* to fill with people, to subdue and to rule over (Genesis 1:28), to cultivate and to protect (Genesis 2:15), to be received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:4), to be thoroughly enjoyed (1 Timothy 6:17b) and to testify to man about God and his kindness towards man, by providing in his needs and by filling his heart with joy (Acts 14:17)!

4. The purpose of Genesis 1 is “for what purpose” did God create?

The purpose of the revelation of the history of creation in Genesis 1 is to tell *for what purpose* God created the universe. God created man in order to give man a purpose and a task full of significance (Genesis 1:28).

- **The task of increasing the number of people on earth.**

God’s original intention was to fill the earth with people who were bearing the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27)! God designed the earth to be filled with people who know him, love him, obey him and glorify him.

- **The task of managing the earth for God.**

The word “to subdue” literally means “*to conquer, to subjugate*” or “*to tame, to make level, to press down*”. Therefore, the task and destination of man is to bring culture to the uncultured areas of God’s creation. Man must make the uninhabitable areas habitable, turn the fallow land into arable land and tame the wild animals for domestic use. Man must discover the natural laws in God’s creation, that is practise responsible science, and use these physical laws for the well-being of people.

However, this right to practise science, agriculture and industry is not without limits! The word “subdue” also means “*to preserve, to pickle*”. Therefore, the task and destination of man is to preserve God’s creation from misuse, abuse and destruction. God has imposed limits for the use of all natural resources. Man may not misuse the resources of the earth for selfish enrichment or for the destruction of other people who live on earth. Man may not abuse God’s creation by polluting the atmosphere, air, water or earth in a way that permanently disturbs the delicate balance of nature and leads to the destruction of the human race on earth. Man may also not waste the resources of the earth by mismanagement as for example: deforestation, overgrazing and unjust division of the land, etc. thus causing famine and floods that lead to hunger, all kinds of diseases and poverty.

The task of subduing includes *bringing biblical or Christian culture to all the people in the world*. After the fall of man into sin, the cultures of all the nations in the world have incorporated sinful and corrupt aspects. It is God’s purpose to change the sinful aspects in every human culture on earth! God intends to create a special people of God with a special culture, called “the culture of the kingdom of God”! Because human behaviour is the object of God’s revelation, therefore most biblical teaching is directly aimed at changing culture!

- **The task of ruling over the earth.**

God’s original intention was that man would rule over the earth on behalf of God. The word “to rule over” literally means “*to have dominion over, to subjugate*”. Therefore the task and destination of man is to control the creatures which God created in the air, on the land and in the sea. For example, in Proverbs 12:10 we read, “A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal, but the kindest act of the wicked are cruel.” A Christian should therefore not be cruel to animals, but instead give good care to the animals in his possession. The task of man is *to use* these animals, birds and fish *for the benefit of people*. Man must rule over them by making wise and edifying decisions with regard to the well-being of man.

However, this task to rule is *limited to animals, fish and birds*. The task to rule is not extended to include other people. This means that certain people may not arbitrarily rule over other people, oppress them, enslave them or destroy them. The authority and responsibility to “rule” over people, including the authority and responsibility to punish them, is clearly limited to the governing authorities (Romans 13:1-7). Nevertheless, all governments in the world have a limited authority (Acts 4:19-20; Acts 5:29). They are responsible and accountable to God, who delegated this authority and responsibility to them.

- **The task to live on earth for Christ.**

In the light of the New Testament revelation, not only were all things created by Christ, who is the visible image of the invisible God, but also *for Christ* (Colossians 1:15-16). Thus, the purpose of created man is to live for Christ, that is, to live according to the purpose of God and to the glory of God (Romans 11:36)!

5. The purpose of Genesis 1 is NOT “how long?”

The purpose of the revelation of the history of creation in Genesis 1 is not to tell *how long* creation took or *how fast* God performed his work of creation.

- **The time or duration of the creation is not stated in the Bible.**

The creation of the heavens and the earth took place *before* the completion of creation in six creation days (Genesis 1:1-2). The Bible makes absolute no statement about the duration of the original creation of the universe including the earth in terms of modern “time”. It only says that they were created “in the beginning” and this beginning cannot be imagined, let alone calculated by man, no matter whether he is a secular or a Christian scientist. After the universe including the earth was created, the Bible speaks of *the completion of the creation of the earth* as happening in six “days”. How must these six days be interpreted?

- **The interpretation of the word “day” in Genesis.**

The Hebrew word “day” (jom) has different meanings in the Bible. It has four meanings in Genesis chapter 1-2.

Genesis 1:5. A creation day.

“A creation day” began when God caused the light to shine in the morning and ended when God interrupted that period of shining light at the beginning of the evening. “The evening and the morning” denote the limits of “one of God’s creation days”, however in reversed order! While in Psalm 55:17 the Psalmist intends to say that he is crying to God “the whole day long”, he reverses the words and says: “*Evening, morning and noon* I cry out in distress.” This reversed order is maintained because the “days” in the Israelite calendar began at sundown (and not at midnight like the Roman calendar or at sunrise in popular language). That is why the order “there was evening, and there was morning” is maintained throughout the description of God’s six days of creation.

Because “time” as we know it today was only created on the fourth creation day, there is absolutely no indication how long the first creation day or any of the six creation days took. The creation days are described not in terms of their relationship to the sun, but in terms of their relationship to God! The six creation days are not “days of man”, but are “days of God”! With respect to the six creation days, we can therefore not speak of “time” in any scientific sense!

Genesis 1:14a,18. A day as the period the sun shines during a calendar day.

The word “day” refers only to the *day-time period* of a 24 hour day. The other part of the 24 hour day is called “night”.

Genesis 1:14b. An ordinary day of 24 hours.

The word “day” refers to a calendar day of 24 hours, because it is the time taken for the earth to turn once on its axle with respect to the sun.

Genesis 2:4. The whole period of creation is called “day”!

The word “day” referred to “*the whole period of creation*”, which included the original creation of the universe as well as the completion of creation of the earth in six creation days! Translation: “These are the generations” (or: “This is the historical account) of the heavens and the earth when they were created¹⁵⁶, *in the day*¹⁵⁷ that the LORD God made¹⁵⁸ the earth and the heavens, besides ...”

Conclusion. The word “day” as a 24 hour day cannot be indiscriminately applied to the history of creation in Genesis chapter 1-2! The time or duration of “a creation day” may be very long, but that fact is not stated in the Bible.

- **The time of creation depends on the speed of creation.**

The famous scientist Lawrence, proved that “time is dependent on speed.” The time needed to travel in the universe is proportionately dependent on the speed with which one travels. For example, we know that man cannot travel at the speed of light. But if it were possible for a man to make a return trip to the planet Pluto *with the speed of light*, then he would take less than *11 hours* to complete the journey. However, when he returns to earth where the speed of travelling did not change, more than *12 years* would have gone by on earth, because “time” on earth does not travel at the speed of light.

¹⁵⁶ Hebrew: be-bar<am

¹⁵⁷ Hebrew: be-jom

¹⁵⁸ Hebrew: as>ot

Likewise, the time needed for God to create the universe is proportionately dependent on the speed with which God created! The Bible does not reveal at what speed God created the universe and earth. God, who created *light itself*, could also have created the universe and the earth *at the speed of light*. The time or duration of the creation may have been very short, but also this fact is not stated in the Bible.

Thus, the Bible record does not make any statement concerning “how” God created the universe including earth or “how long” his creation took. With respect to the *various theories* of the origin of the universe, it is not the Bible which needs to amend its record (it simply has no record about the *how* and *how long* of creation!), but it is *the scientists who need to adjust their theories* again and again, as we already have evidence in the history of science.

No positive results are gained by condemning scientists who, in their search for truth, are making *theoretical* statements about the origin of the universe and earth: *how* they think the universe came into being and *how long* they think it took. Christians also do not know the answers to these questions. There is absolutely no way Christians can make dogmatic statements about *how* God went about in creating the universe and the earth or about *how long* the creation of the universe and the earth took! There are many more important issues about which Christians do have certain knowledge! Let Christians humbly proclaim this!

F. THE HISTORY OF THE CREATED WORLD (Genesis 2:4 - 25).

1. The heading (Genesis 2:4a).

▪ Translation.

“This¹⁵⁹ is the *historical account* (*history, generations*)¹⁶⁰ of the heavens and the earth, when they were created¹⁶¹.”

The word “this” generally refers to what follows, not to what precedes. Genesis 2:4 is thus a heading (title), not a subscription (sub-title). The word “historical account” cannot be used of “the origin” of the world, because everywhere in Scripture the word is used of “what issues from something else: first of the people themselves, their “generations or descendants”, and second of what happens with these people, their “history”. The word is not used of the creation out of what does not exist.

▪ Heading of the book of Genesis.

Genesis 2:4a makes a clear division between *the history of creation* and *the history of the created world*. The words “when they were created” show that the history of the created world begins from the moment the creation itself has become a completed reality.

Genesis 2:4a is the heading or title of not only Genesis 2:4 - 4:26, but of the rest of the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis relates besides the history of creation (the beginning of all existence), also the beginning of the history of sin and its curse within God’s creation (broken relationships within families and the wickedness of man on the whole earth), the beginning of the history of human culture (including the sinful aspects of human culture), the beginning of the history of human nations, the beginning of the history of God’s redemption and the beginning of the history of God’s people.

Within the book of Genesis, more such smaller “historical accounts” are included (Genesis 5:1; Genesis 6:9; Genesis 10:1; Genesis 11:10,27; Genesis 25:12,19; Genesis 36:1,9; Genesis 37:2).

2. One or two creation accounts?

▪ The arguments for two conflicting creation accounts refuted.

Some people argue that Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 is a later (5th century B.C.) account and Genesis 2:4 - 3:24 is another, earlier (9th century B.C.) account of creation. They base their arguments on the different names for God and the different orders of creation in these two accounts:

The name of God.

They argue that the name of God in Genesis 2:4 - 3:24 was “LORD God”¹⁶², while in Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 it was only “God”¹⁶³. They think that the name “God” was later added to the original name “LORD”. Thus according to them this must indicate two different sources, two different creation accounts.

However, it is more plausible to regard the name “God” as the oldest and original name for God. After God revealed his own name “LORD”¹⁶⁴ to Moses (Exodus 3:14-15), this name was added to the name “God” to indicate about which God the Bible was speaking, i.e. not the god of the other religions, but the God who revealed himself in the Bible!

The Hebrew “the LORD God” should be translated or interpreted as “God, the LORD”. Thus, both Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 and Genesis 2:4 - 3:24 is speaking of one and the same God! And consequently, there is no Scriptural warrant to

¹⁵⁹ Hebrew: <eleh

¹⁶⁰ Hebrew: Pl. toldot, = toledet

¹⁶¹ Hebrew: be-bare<am

¹⁶² Hebrew: JWHW Elohim

¹⁶³ Hebrew: Elohim

¹⁶⁴ Hebrew: JHWH or JaHWeH

suggest two different creation accounts. There is no adequate explanation why this name, “God, the LORD”, was used in Genesis 2:4 - 3:24 and not in Genesis 1:1 - 2:3.

The order of creation.

They argue that in Genesis 1:1 - 2:3 the order of creation is: “plants” (1:11), “animals” (1:24), “man and woman” (1:26-27); and in Genesis 2:4 - 3:24, the order is: “man” (2:7), “plants” (2:8-9), “animals” (2:19), “woman” (2:22). However, Genesis 2:7 does not speak of *when* God created man, but of *how* he formed¹⁶⁵ him out of the dust of the ground! Genesis 2:8-9 does not speak of *the creation* of plants and trees on the dry ground, but of *the planting*¹⁶⁶ of a garden and *the sprouting (growing)*¹⁶⁷ of every kind of pleasant tree out of the ground in the garden in Eden! Genesis 2:19 does not speak of *the creation* of animals and birds, but of *the forming (fashioning)*¹⁶⁸ of animals and birds out of the ground! And Genesis 2:21-24 does not speak of *when* God created the woman, but of *how* he built (erected, established)¹⁶⁹ her out of the rib taken from the man! Thus, Genesis 2:4-24 is not another account of creation, but a further elaboration of the creation account in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3!

▪ **Genesis 2 is a preparation for Genesis 3.**

Genesis 2:4-7 is not a second historical account of the creation, but rather a part of “the historical account of the fall of man into sin and its consequences”. The main purpose of Genesis chapter 2 is to prepare for the fall of man in Genesis chapter 3. The contents of Genesis 2 does not only speak of the creation of the man (2:4-7), but also of the garden in Eden, which was the perfect dwelling before the fall (2:8-14), the task of man in the garden (2:15), the commandment of God which was disobeyed and led to the fall (2:16-17), the creation of the woman who played an important part in the fall (2:18-24) and the absence of shame (i.e. guilt towards God that is expressed before man) which was lost after the fall (2:25).

3. How plants were created (Genesis 2:4b-6).

▪ **The long sentence in Genesis 2:4b - 7.**

Division.

This long sentence should be divided as follows:

- Genesis 2:4b-5 the first part of the sentence
- Genesis 2:6 a parenthesis (*...*)
- Genesis 2:7 the second part of the sentence

Translation.

(Throughout: “The LORD God” meaning: “God, the LORD” is used).

- (4b) “At the time (in the day)¹⁷⁰ the LORD God made¹⁷¹ earth and heaven, (5) besides every¹⁷² bush (shrub)¹⁷³ of the field¹⁷⁴, ere (before) it was¹⁷⁵ on the earth¹⁷⁶, and every grass (herb)¹⁷⁷ of the field, ere (before) it sprouted (grew)¹⁷⁸, because the LORD God had not caused it to rain¹⁷⁹ on the earth, and (because) there was no man¹⁸⁰ to work (cultivate)¹⁸¹, the ground (soil)¹⁸²
- (6) *but¹⁸³ a mist (vapour)¹⁸⁴ rose up¹⁸⁵ from the earth and watered (irrigated)¹⁸⁶ the whole face of the ground*
- (7) the LORD God formed¹⁸⁷ man, dust (soil, the dry and loose earth)¹⁸⁸ out of the ground¹⁸⁹, and breathed (blew)¹⁹⁰ into his nostrils¹⁹¹ the breath (life, soul, spirit)¹⁹² alive (living)¹⁹³ (adjective, together: breath of life), and man became a soul (breath, life, spirit)¹⁹⁴ life (living thing)¹⁹⁵ (noun, together: man became a living being)”.

¹⁶⁵ Hebrew: wa-jitser, = jatsar

¹⁶⁶ Hebrew: Kal nata>

¹⁶⁷ Hebrew: Pi. wa-jatsmach, = tsimeach

¹⁶⁸ Hebrew: wa-jitser, = jatsar

¹⁶⁹ Hebrew: Kal wa-jiben, = banah

¹⁷⁰ Hebrew: be-jom

¹⁷¹ Hebrew: >sot, = >asah

¹⁷² Hebrew: we-kol

¹⁷³ Hebrew: siach

¹⁷⁴ Hebrew: sadeh

¹⁷⁵ Hebrew: terem jihjeh

¹⁷⁶ Hebrew: ba-arets

¹⁷⁷ Hebrew: >eseb

¹⁷⁸ Hebrew: terem Kal jitsmach, = tsamach

¹⁷⁹ Hebrew: Hiph. himtir

¹⁸⁰ Hebrew: we-adam <ajin

¹⁸¹ Hebrew la>ebod = >abad

¹⁸² Hebrew: ha-edamah

¹⁸³ Hebrew: we

¹⁸⁴ Hebrew: <ed

¹⁸⁵ Hebrew: ja>eleh, = >alah

¹⁸⁶ Hebrew: Hiph. hishqah

¹⁸⁷ Hebrew: wa-jitser, = jatsar

¹⁸⁸ Hebrew: >afar

¹⁸⁹ Hebrew: min ha-edamah

¹⁹⁰ Hebrew: Kal wa-jippach, = puach

¹⁹¹ Hebrew: be-<afau, = <af

- **The garden and its luxuriant vegetation.**

The bushes, grass and herbs.

The description of especially the plant life *next to* the creation of the earth and heaven is because this chapter deals with the garden. The difference between bushes and herbs are that the bushes (shrubs) remain for years, while the herbs (grass) sprout out every year. The difference between grass and herbs are that the grass sprouts by itself due to the rainfall and the herbs sprout because of the cultivation of the soil by man (i.e. they need to be sown). The point is that they were *created* before they began to grow. These bushes (shrubs), grass and herbs were *made* by the Lord God *ere* (*before*) they began to sprout!

The mist and the rain.

The *parenthesis* (Genesis 2:6) gives additional knowledge about what happened when plants were created in contrast to Genesis 2:5, which tells us what happens today. At the creation, God caused mist to rise from the earth to give the created plants the water they needed to grow. Nowadays God causes rain to fall from the sky. The damp (vapour), which in Job 36:27 distills into rain, is the necessary condition for the growth of plants.

Plants created before man.

The verses 5-6 confirm that plants were created before man was created.

4. How man was created (Genesis 4:7).

- **Dust out of the ground.**

To form.

The verb “to form (fashion)” is used of the work of a potter. Although this could give the impression that man was formed into a clay doll, as in Babylonian and Egyptian mythology, the word is used in a wider meaning as synonym of “to create”, “to make” (Isaiah 43:1; Isaiah 44:2; Isaiah 45:7,18).

Dust.

Translation: Not “he formed man *out of the dust of the ground*”, but “he formed man, *dust out of the ground*”! God created man as mere “dust”. The word “dust” does not simply mean clay, but every kind of material which is divided into its finest particles (Deuteronomy 9:21; 2 Kings 23:12; Joshua 7:6). The text says that the body of man was formed out of similar materials as is found in the soil of the earth. Again it does not support the Babylonian and Egyptian notion of the production of a “clay” doll.

- **Breath of life and a living being.**

Breath of life.¹⁹⁶

“God blew in his nostrils the breath of life, through which man became a living being.” God gave both man and beast the ability of “respiration” and thereby “life” (Genesis 7:22).

A living being.¹⁹⁷

The word is not equivalent with our “soul” (spirit), because the undivided body and the spirit of man makes man “a living being”. The word “soul” here expresses the total man. The term “living” is generally used of animals: “living creatures” (Genesis 1:21,24). Both humans and animals are “living creatures”¹⁹⁸ (Genesis 9:16). The uniqueness of man (in differentiation from animals) lies in the fact that he was created in “the image of God”.

5. The garden in the region of Eden (Genesis 2:8-9).

- **The garden in the region of Eden.**

Garden, not “Paradise”.

The word “Paradise” is not mentioned in Genesis at all. It is originally a Persian word meaning “orchard” or “garden” and is later found in the Old Testament (Nehemiah 2:8; Ecclesiastes 2:5; Song of Songs 4:13), but *never* to denote the Garden of Eden. The Greek translation (Septuagint) introduced the Persian word “Paradise” instead of “garden” into the book of Genesis.

The region of Eden.

The garden was not called “Eden”, but the region in which the garden was located was called “Eden”. It was located “in the east”, that is, from the viewpoint of the inspired writer. The location of the region Eden cannot be determined.

¹⁹² Hebrew: nishmat, = neshamah

¹⁹³ Hebrew: chajim, = chai

¹⁹⁴ Hebrew: nefesh

¹⁹⁵ Hebrew: chajah

¹⁹⁶ Hebrew: nishmat chajim

¹⁹⁷ Hebrew: nefesh chajah, a living being or living creature

¹⁹⁸ Hebrew: nefesh chajah, a living creature

▪ **The trees in the midst of the garden.**

The tree of the life¹⁹⁹.

The word “life” is in the plural and is explained as “a plural of abstraction”. The definite article “the” indicates that “life” is in a special way given or maintained by this tree. Although the other trees also served man as a livelihood, the tree of life must refer to a special kind of life, namely “eternal life” (Genesis 3:22.)

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil²⁰⁰.

The definite article “the” indicates that “knowledge” is a special kind of knowledge, namely, the total knowledge of and the ability to distinguish between what is good and what is evil in general; knowledge of what is just and what is unjust (2 Samuel 14:17; 1 Kings 3:9); knowledge of what is profitable and what is detrimental; knowledge of what is worthwhile and what is worthless; and knowledge of what is pleasant and what is unpleasant (Deuteronomy 1:39; 2 Samuel 19:35; Isaiah 7:15-16).

Man before the fall must have had some “knowledge of good and evil”, because he was commanded *to protect* the garden (from evil)(Genesis 2:15). What this special knowledge was had to do with God’s prohibition to eat from this tree (Genesis 2:16-17). Obedience to God’s command was “good” and disobedience to God’s command was “evil”.

▪ **The four rivers.**

We cannot determine the first two rivers and therefore also not the location of the region of Eden. The text speaks of “a river watering the garden (flowing through the garden)” and then separating into four rivers.

Pishon.

“The river Pishon winds through the entire land of Havilah.” Which river is meant, is not known anymore. The land of “Havilah” is also not known anymore. According to Genesis 10:29, Havilah was the descendant of “Joktan”. The expression “the area of Havilah to Shur, near the Egyptian border” or “to the east of Egypt” denotes the area of the Ishmaelites (Genesis 25:18). It also denotes the area of the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:7). The most famous area of gold was “Ophir” (1 Kings 9:28; Genesis 10:29), but Ophir can likewise not be located with certainty. “Aromatic resin” is found in several areas: South Arabia, Babylonia and India. “Onyx”, a totally unknown kind of precious stone, is also found in several places.

Gihon.

“The river Gihon winds through the entire land of Cush.” Which river is meant, is also not known anymore. The land of “Cush” is generally Ethiopia, but according to Genesis 10:7, Cush is the ancestor of the Arabic tribes “Seba” (the Sabaeans) and “Dedan”. And according to Genesis 10:8, Cush is the ancestor of Nimrod. Nimrod is the founder of the kingdoms of Babylonia or Shinar (Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh) and the founder of the kingdoms of Assyria (Nineveh, Rehoboth, Ir, Caleh and Resen). In 2 Chronicles 14:9, Zerah the Cushite was probably from a tribe in Arabia, because in order to come from Ethiopia, he had to pass through Egypt, which was unthinkable at that time.

Hiddekel.

The river “Idiqlat” or shortened to “Diqlat” in the Assyrian language is the river “Tigra” in the Persian language, which finally became the river “Tigris” in the Greek language. It runs along the east side of Asshur, the great city which was later eclipsed by Nineveh (north of Asshur along the Tigris).

Euphrates.

Still exists.

6. God’s task and prohibition (Genesis 2:15-17).

▪ **God’s command to man (Genesis 2:15).**

“The Lord God *took*²⁰¹ man and *put (settled)*²⁰² him in the garden of (meaning: located in) Eden *to work (cultivate, till)* it²⁰³ and *to watch (guard)* it²⁰⁴.”

The so-called “Paradise-life” is wrongly pictured by some people as “a wonderful doing nothing”. Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:15 proves that man was given a task and a responsibility. The perfectness of the created earth (Genesis 1:31) does not exclude work (cultivation) of the earth! The wonderful garden still needed cultivation and protection. Man had to dedicate his physical and spiritual abilities to this task and the result is “culture”. Thus man was given “a cultural commission”.

The fact that man had to protect (guard) the garden shows that there already existed an evil power against which man had to be on his guard. The evil power is not yet denoted here, but is revealed in chapter 3.

¹⁹⁹ Hebrew: ets ha-chajim

²⁰⁰ Hebrew: ets ha-da>at tob wa-ra>

²⁰¹ Hebrew: Kal wa-jiqqach, = laqach

²⁰² Hebrew: Kal wa-jannichehu, = nucha

²⁰³ Hebrew: Kal le->abdah, = >abad

²⁰⁴ Hebrew: u-le-shamrah, = shamar

▪ **God's prohibition to man (Genesis 2:16-17).**

And the Lord God *ordered (commanded)*²⁰⁵ the man saying: "From all the trees in the garden you *may eat freely*²⁰⁶, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you *may not eat*²⁰⁷ from it, for in the day you eat from it, you *will certainly die*²⁰⁸."

The knowledge of good and evil.

The unique character of this tree lies in the fact that the special knowledge of good and evil is not attained by eating from the tree, but exactly the opposite, by refraining from eating from the tree! God's specific commandment attached to this tree makes it very clear to man that not eating of the tree is "good" and eating from the tree is "evil"! Thus, the knowledge of good and evil is not something gained by experience (!) but is something gained by obedience to God and his commandments! Paul also only knew what "sin" was, not through experience, but through knowledge of the commandments of God (Romans 7). The issue of what is "good" and what is "evil" is never relative nor situational, but always absolute. It never depends on man or on man's views of good and evil, nor on man's personal situation, nor on man's personal experience, but always on God and God's revelation! Adam had to trust God that the only right way of gaining the ability to discern between "good" and "evil" is not by doing evil, but by living deliberately according to God's commandments! "Evil" was not something which man *felt* was harmful, unpleasant, or morally unacceptable, but "evil" was something which man *knew* was against God's will. Something was "evil" because it was expressly forbidden by God!

The test-commandment.

That is why this first commandment was called the "test" commandment, which placed man before a clear choice between "good" (obeying God) and "evil" (disobeying God). The choice was between complete submission to the will of God and consequently live for ever, or making oneself independent from the living God (the Creator and Maintainer of all life!) and consequently becoming a prey to death. This is the only time in the Bible that man had a perfect free will. After the fall into sin, man's free will is severely tainted and limited (Romans 8:7-8).

7. How the animals were created and classified (Genesis 2:19-20a).

▪ **The issue is not the creation, but the naming of the animals.**

"(When) the Lord God *had formed (fashioned)*²⁰⁹ out of the ground all *the living creatures (animals)* of the field²¹⁰ and all the birds of the air, he *brought*²¹¹ them to the man to see what he would name them. And whatever the man called each *living creature*²¹² that was its name. So the man gave names to all *the livestock*²¹³, the birds of the air and all the living creatures (animals of the field)."

Genesis 1:24-27 related that God created the animals before he created man. Genesis 2:19-20 does not reverse this order, but states that some time after the creation of animals (and man) he brought the animals to man to give them names. This act of God is related to his plan to create a woman for man (Genesis 2:18). Before God fulfilled his plan to create the woman, he caused (awakened) a deep desire within the man for a wife! This deep desire was awakened by observing the animals. By naming the animals, he intuitively realised on the one hand, his own kind in distinction to that of the animals, and on the other hand, his loneliness, his desire for fellowship. He observed that the animals had a partner which he did not have and also that the animals could not meet this need for fellowship. So his longing (desire) for fellowship with a being that was completely his equal grew stronger and stronger. God would meet this need of the man by forming a companion for him, the woman.

8. How God created the woman (Genesis 2:18,20b-25).

▪ **Translation.**

"And the Lord God said, It is not good for the man *to be alone*²¹⁴. *I will make*²¹⁵ a help (*helpmate, helper*)²¹⁶ *corresponding to (suitable for) him*²¹⁷."

But for *man* (rather than the personal name: Adam) was *not found*²¹⁸ a suitable helper. Literally: So the Lord God *caused to fall upon*²¹⁹ the man a *deep sleep*²²⁰. And while *he was sleeping*²²¹, he *took*²²² one of the man's *sides (ribs)*²²³

²⁰⁵ Hebrew: Kal wa-jetsau, = tsawah

²⁰⁶ Hebrew: <akol to<kel, 2x this verb

²⁰⁷ Hebrew: lo< to<kal

²⁰⁸ Hebrew: mot tamut, 2x the verb

²⁰⁹ Hebrew: Kal wa-jitser, = jatsar

²¹⁰ Hebrew: kol chajat ha-sadeh

²¹¹ Hebrew: Hiph. wa-jabe<, = bo>

²¹² Hebrew: nefesh chajat

²¹³ Hebrew: behemah

²¹⁴ Hebrew: lebad, adverb

²¹⁵ Hebrew: Kal <e>eseh, =>asah

²¹⁶ Hebrew: >ezer

²¹⁷ Hebrew: ke-negdo

²¹⁸ Hebrew: Kal lo-matsa<

²¹⁹ Hebrew: Hiph. wa-jippel, = nafal

²²⁰ Hebrew: tardemah

²²¹ Hebrew: Ka; wa-jishan, = jashan

and closed up²²⁴ with flesh²²⁵ the under part (the place)²²⁶. Then the Lord God built²²⁷ the side (rib)²²⁸ which he had taken out from the man into a woman²²⁹, and he brought her²³⁰ to the man. The man said, “This²³¹ this time (this once, now)²³² is bone of my bones²³³ and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called “woman”²³⁴, for she was taken out of man²³⁵.” For this reason (therefore)²³⁶ a man shall (must) leave²³⁷ his father and mother and cling to (cleave, join, glue together, be united to)²³⁸ his wife, and they shall (must) become one flesh²³⁹. And the two of them²⁴⁰ were naked²⁴¹, the man and the woman, and they were not ashamed (i.e. did not feel shame)²⁴².”

▪ **God’s decision to create a companion for man (Genesis 2:18).**

This decision of God is comparable to his decision in Genesis 1:26. Genesis 1:26 states God’s plan, Genesis 1:27 relates God’s execution of that plan and Genesis 2:18-25 relates how God’s plan was executed with respect to especially the woman. And like there, this decision expresses the special significance of the creation of the woman. “A helper corresponding to him” is a person who is as it were his complement in every respect. Each and together they express the image of God.

▪ **Rib or side (Genesis 2:21-22a).**

The Hebrew word is never used elsewhere in the Bible in the sense of “rib”. The normal use is “side”. The “side” of the ark (Exodus 25:12,14), of the altar (Exodus 27:7), of the tabernacle (Exodus 26:20), of a mountain (“slope”, 2 Samuel 16:13). Also a “side” chamber of the temple (1 Kings 6:5; Ezekiel 41:5ff). But as the Lord took “one of his tsal>ah” it can only be understood as “one of his ribs”. There is absolutely no ground to think that man was originally a person with two sexes, or that man now has one rib less than woman. There are people who ridicule the creation of woman out of man (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:8-9). What God revealed is that he created woman out of man, and not precisely how he created her. God’s intention was to reveal that he designed the man and the woman for each other and that “the two being one” is a wonderful mystery. The woman was created from the body of the man and this reveals that each was made for the other, with the definite purpose of joining together one man to one woman. After the creation of the woman, all other men are subsequently born of women (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:12).

▪ **Wo-man (Genesis 2:22b-23).**

God brought her to the man. That is, when the man woke up from his deep sleep, he immediately recognised her to be the fulfilment of the deep longing (desire) awakened in him and that she was one of his own kind, his equal. By God’s revelation to him, he knew that she as a whole was taken out of his body. He knew and sensed her complete difference to the animals and he exclaimed, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”. In poetic language filled with wonderful joy the man gave her the name “wo-man”, a word which is formed by adding the female ending to the male word. Of course the original language of man was not Hebrew, as Hebrew was one of the languages that originated at the confusion of languages at Babel. But this original play of words could also be expressed in the new languages and was maintained by the inspired writer.

▪ **Marriage (Genesis 2:24).**

Words of the inspired writer.

Genesis 2:24 are not the words of Adam (because they follow verse 23), but the words of God. Marriage is not the institution of man, but of God.

Not a statement, but an ordinance.

The words do not simply state that a marriage happens, “Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” The words are an ordinance of God, as Matthew 19:5-6 and Ephesians 5:31 clearly teach, “Therefore a man shall (must) leave his father and mother and shall (must) cleave to his wife, and they shall (must) become one flesh”! These words express the close and unbreakable relationship which God intended in the

²²² Hebrew: Kal wa-jiqqach, = laqach

²²³ Hebrew: tsal>ah

²²⁴ Hebrew: K. wa-jisgor, = sagar

²²⁵ Hebrew: basar

²²⁶ Hebrew: tachat

²²⁷ Hebrew: Kal wa-jiben, = banah

²²⁸ Hebrew: tsela>

²²⁹ Hebrew: le-<ishshah

²³⁰ Hebrew: Hiph. wa-jebi<eha, = bo>

²³¹ Hebrew: zo<t

²³² Hebrew: ha-pa>am

²³³ Hebrew: >etsem me->etsamai

²³⁴ Hebrew: <ishshah (Eve)

²³⁵ Hebrew: <ish

²³⁶ Hebrew: >al ken

²³⁷ Hebrew: K. ja>ezab, = >azab

²³⁸ Hebrew: Kal we-dabaq

²³⁹ Hebrew: le-basar <echad

²⁴⁰ Hebrew: shenehem

²⁴¹ Hebrew: >erumim, = <erwah

²⁴² Hebrew: Hitp. jitboshashu, = bosh

marriage relationship. They express the character and responsibilities of the marriage relationship, as God intended it and ordained it.

- **The state of sinlessness (Genesis 2:25).**

The statement that “although they were naked, they felt no shame”, does not describe a certain moral deficiency, but rather the state of sinlessness. The awareness of being naked and the feelings people have about it in public are a consequence of the fall into sin (Genesis 3:7,10), and is thus an expression of guilt before God. Therefore in the Bible “to feel shame” towards other people is the outward expression of “to feel guilt” towards God!

G. MYTHOLOGY AND SCIENCE.

1. Mythology and the origin of the world.

Among other nations there exist traditions concerning creation. Some learned men think that other ancient creation accounts have influenced the biblical account. But the differences between the biblical account and these ancient accounts far outstrip the similarities! The similarities can be explained. From the beginning, God must have revealed to man the history of his creation. This was orally transmitted and finally recorded in Genesis chapter 1-2. The memory of this revelation was passed on from one generation to another in many nations. Due to a lack of inspiration from God’s Spirit in the other nations, the creation account has been corrupted considerably through the ages. But due to the inspiration from God’s Spirit in Israel, the creation account has been preserved accurately.

2. Science and the early man-like creatures.

How should Christians regard the so-called “cave-men” or various “man-like” species that lived many thousands of years ago? Archaeologists have found parts of the skull or skeleton of creatures which *they believe* were the ancestors of modern man (‘Homo Sapiens’).

- **The discovery of the early man-like creatures.**

Palaeo-anthropologists have found the remains of man-like creatures, commonly called “ape-men” or “cave men”. According to modern estimates, the so-called “Zinjanthropus” of Tanzania lived 1 750 000 years ago. The “Swanscombe” man of England, the “Pithecanthropus” of Java and the “Sinanthropus” of China lived from 200 000 - 500 000 years ago. All of them show marked differences from modern man (“Homo Sapiens”), especially with regard to their skulls and teeth.

The “Neanderthal” cave man is thought to have lived from 50 000 - 100 000 years ago. He has skeletal differences from modern man of much the same order as those which have been accepted as valid evidence of specific distinction in other groups of primates (the highest order of mammals, namely, man and apes). Archaeologists believe that the “Cro-Magnon” man should be classed as “Homo-Sapiens” and his remains seem to date back to 20 000 B.C.

- **The culture of the early man-like creatures.**

These early man-like creatures cannot be dismissed as mere “apes” in their mentality. Their remains are accompanied by stone implements, such as arrow-heads and axe heads. Charred remains indicate strongly the use of fire for cooking purposes. In case of Neanderthal deposits, there seems to be evidence of burial with adjacent implements as if there were some belief in life after death. Some crude statuettes found may possibly have had cultic purposes. Some remarkable cave paintings may have been of Neanderthal origin. All this evidence shows that these early man-like creatures possessed a considerable intelligence and resourcefulness. However, it must be remembered that statements such as these are conjecture based on scanty scientific evidence.

- **The dating of the early man-like creatures.**

The traditional dating method is by carbon-14 analysis or by potassium-argon process. These dating methods place dinosaurs between 225 000 000 and 65 000 000 years ago and the earliest man-like species only 1 750 000 years ago. However, a recent discovery shows clear footprints of some early man-like species crossing the tracks of dinosaurs and these footprints were scientifically dated to be no more than 13 000 years ago! This proves that the modern scientific methods of dating are highly untrustworthy and must be reviewed.

Nevertheless, these early man-like creatures can hardly be dated later than the creation of Adam and Eve referred to in Genesis chapters 1-3. The date for Adam cannot be determined, but the statistics of Genesis 5 can hardly end up with a date for Adam much earlier than 10 000 B.C. Therefore we are compelled to regard all these man-like creatures as having lived *before* Adam.

- **All people in the present human race are ancestors of Adam.**

Acts 17:26 says, “From one, (and in some ancient texts, “from one blood”), God made every nation of men”. Paul was referring to Adam. Romans 5:12-21 demands that all mankind subsequent to Adam’s time, at least, must have been literally descended from him, since Adam entered into a covenant relationship with God as the representative of the

entire race of man. Therefore, when Adam sinned, all men sinned *once for all*²⁴³ in solidarity with Adam and consequently death passed on to all men.

These Bible passages show that there could not have been any true genetic relationship between Adam and these pre-Adamite man-like creatures. All these man-like creatures that lived before Adam were *genetically* not Adam's ancestors, nor were they involved in Adam's *covenant* with God. Thus, in biblical terms, all these pre-Adamite creatures, however they may have resembled man in some ways, cannot be regarded as "man". They all died out *before* Adam was created.

▪ **All the people in the present human race are created in the spiritual image of God.**

However close the skeletal structure of the "Cro-Magnon" man may have been to modern man ("Homo-Sapiens"), this factor is scarcely relevant to the principle question of whether these pre-Adamite "man-like creatures", "ape-men" or "cave-men" possessed a truly human spirit (soul) or personality! No science can prove that these pre-Adamite creatures possessed a spirit or soul as people possess today!

The very clear teaching of Genesis 1:26-27 is that God created "man" (Adam), both male and female, in his own image, in his own likeness. Thus, when God created "Adam", which means "man" in the Hebrew language, he was creating a qualitatively different being than any other creature he had created before! Adam and Eve were the first "man" and first "woman" created *in the spiritual image of God!* All other creatures, that were ever created before Adam and Eve, did not possess the spiritual image of God! There is absolutely no evidence from science to disprove this!

H. MAN CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE.

1. Man created with a body and a spirit.

Genesis 2:7 says, "God formed man, (from) the dust of the ground and breathed the breath (or "spirit") of life into man, and man became a living being ("soul")." The human body, just like the bodies of animals, consists of the elements that are found in the earth.

However, in differentiation to animals, which were formed by God's creative command, man was *formed by God's hands*. The human body, just like animals, was given "the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7, Genesis 7:22). However, in differentiation to animals, which were given life by God's creative command, man was *given life directly by God's breathing* into his nostrils. This means that God gave man respiration and thereby life.

2. Man given a spiritual nature that corresponds to God's nature.

Genesis 1:26-27 says that the creation of man is even much more special. Man's creation is specially introduced by a decision of the Triune God, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." And then God made man and woman in his own image or appearance, in his own likeness or example. God's life-breath gave man *a spiritual nature* that corresponds to God's nature. Man possessed the real and characteristic features of God. He was a copy of God's personality in lesser degree. In this respect, man is absolutely unique in creation. Nothing in creation besides man bears the image of God!

Man thus has a physical and a spiritual existence, or in short, man has a "body" and a "spirit" (or "soul")²⁴⁴. Man's body is very special, because God formed it with his own hands. Man's spirit is absolutely unique in creation, because only man bears the image of God. Only "man" has the ability to rationalise, to communicate in languages, to study and apply science, to create by means of art or technology, to care for creation or deliberately destroy creation, to distinguish right from wrong, to make responsible decisions and plans, and to communicate and fellowship with God.

3. Man able to communicate with God and fulfil his God-given task.

Genesis 1:28-29 says that God spoke directly to man. This was the very first revelation of God to man! This means that man has the ability to know God and to communicate with God. Moreover, God gave man the task to subdue the earth, to rule over all living creatures and to utilise all plants and trees. God thus reveals that he created the earth *for man* and made *man the steward of his creation*.

4. The importance of this Bible Study.

People ask, "What is the importance of Genesis chapter 1 and 2 for them?" Genesis chapter 1 and 2 gives an answer to the questions, "Where do I come from?" "What was the origin of the universe and the earth?"

The answers are, "The living God of the Bible created me. He specially formed my body from the elements of the earth, gave me life and above all gave me a spiritual nature (a spirit) which corresponds to God's nature" (Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:7). And "The living God of the Bible created a wonderful world in which I may live and work. He created me for a very special purpose, to communicate with him, to fellowship with him (Jeremiah 29:11-13; 1 Corinthians 1:9), to be his steward of his earth and to live to his glory (Isaiah 43:4; Romans 11:36)."

²⁴³ Aorist time in Greek indicates a single event in the past.

²⁴⁴ "Spirit" (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Luke 8:55. "Soul" (Revelation 6:9; Revelation 20:4).