

Chapter Three

The Plot of the Bible Introduced: Genesis 1:1-2:3

The Bible is at the same time sixty-six books written by many authors and one book written by a single author, God. When it is viewed as one book, Genesis functions as its first chapter and initiates the plot of the Bible.¹ Within Genesis it is the first chapter which is the most crucial for understanding the Bible's plot. Specifically, Genesis 1 reveals that God has two primary purposes in the world, but in order to identify them and to understand their significance, we must first interact with many of the interpretational issues found in the chapter.

The Creator God

The Bible's first sentence is the familiar, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). With this statement, only seven words in Hebrew,² Moses announces to his initial audience in the wilderness of Sinai and to God's people of every subsequent generation that their God is the creator of the universe.³ God is the subject of the Bible's very first sentence and in the seven day creation account (Gen 1:1-2:3) is mentioned thirty-five times, interestingly a multiple of seven. The creation account, indeed the entire Bible, is about him. To read it and to come to any other conclusion is to miss its point.⁴

The rest of the Bible echoes the teaching of Genesis 1. There was a time when no matter existed. The psalmist writes, "Before the mountains were born or you gave birth to the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God" (Ps 90:2). In the original creation God created all things out of nothing, *ex nihilo*. Hebrews 22:3 states, "By faith we understand that the

¹ Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Genesis* (Downers Gove: InterVarsity, 2005), 15, 18.

² Moses uses the number seven and its multiples to demonstrate God's design and perfection. The three key words of Genesis 1:1, "God," "heavens" and "earth," are all repeated in Genesis 1:1-2:3 in multiples of seven. "God" is used thirty-five times; "earth" and "heavens" both twenty-one times. After the opening seven-word sentence, the next two phrases in Genesis 1:2 describing the chaotic condition of the earth are both composed of seven words in Hebrew. The phrase "God saw that (it) was (very) good" is found seven times in the initial creation account (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). The phrase "and it was so" is also repeated seven times. The narrative of the six days (Gen 1:3-31) leads to a climactic seventh (Gen 2:1-3). The account of the seventh day in Genesis 2:2-3a contains three sentences, each of seven Hebrew words and each containing the phrase "the seventh day." In the middle of the three sentences are the words "the seventh day." Such a pattern cannot be coincidence. (U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis: Part I From Adam to Noah Genesis I-VI* 8 [Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961], 12-15; Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* [San Francisco: Harper, 1988], 66-68; Nahum M Sarna, *Genesis* [JPS Torah Commentary 1; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989], 4; W. Robert Godfrey, *God's Pattern for Creation: A Covenantal Reading of Genesis 1* [Phillipsburg: P&R, 2003], 32-33).

³ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 58.

⁴ Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction on and Commentary* (Downers Gove: InterVarsity, 1967), 43.

worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.” Romans 4:17 tells us that “God ... calls into being that which does not exist.” God is the creator (Ps 33:6, 9; John 1:3; Col 1:16; Rev 4:11) who created everything out of nothing.⁵ But when was that original creation? We will seek the answer in Genesis 1.

While creation is the major theme of Genesis 1, unfortunately many twenty-first century Christians have come to think of Genesis 1 primarily as fodder for the creation versus evolution debate. If that is all we see in the chapter, we are missing much of what God has there for us. When allowed to speak for itself, Genesis 1 triumphantly affirms the sovereignty, wisdom and omnipotence of the Creator God⁶ and at the same time introduces the reader to God’s ultimate purposes.

The Translation of Genesis 1:1-2

In reading any book, special attention needs to be given to its opening words and that is especially true of the book of Genesis.⁷ Within Genesis 1 it is the first two verses that are the most important for understanding the chapter as a whole, and therefore the first issue to be decided is to determine their proper translation. Chart 4 shows a comparison of the translations of Genesis 1:1-2 in the New American Standard Bible (NASB), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) and the New International Version (NIV).

The difference between these three translations, though slight, is significant. The NASB intimates that the dark, water-covered earth of Genesis 1:2 is the result of God’s creating work in Genesis 1:1. The NRSV translates Genesis 1:1 as a dependent “when” clause and implies that a

⁵ Wayne Grudem. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 262-65.

⁶ Cf. Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC 1; Waco: Word, 1987), 40.

⁷ Gordon J. Wenham, *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000). 24.

Chart 4

Alternate Translations of Genesis 1:1-2

	<u>New American Standard Bible</u>		<u>New Revised Standard Version</u>		<u>New International Version</u>
vs 1	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.	vs 1	In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,	vs 1	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
vs 2	The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep....	vs 2	the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep....	vs 2	Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep....

Chart 5

Is the Formless Earth of Genesis 1:2 the Result of the Creation of Genesis 1:1?

	<u>Genesis 1</u>
vs 1	In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth .
vs 2	The earth was formless (Hebrew: <i>tohu</i>) and void, and darkness (Hebrew: <i>hoshek</i>) was over the surface of the deep....
vs 18	For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it <i>and</i> did not create it a waste place (Hebrew: <i>tohu</i>), ¹ <i>but</i> formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else.
vs 19	I have not spoken in secret, in some dark (Hebrew: <i>hoshek</i>) land...."

¹Clearly Genesis 1:2 cannot be describing the result of the creation of Genesis 1:1 since Isaiah 45:18 states that God did not create the earth as a formless/waste place (Hebrew: *tohu*).

formless, void earth was already present when God began to create in 1:1. The NIV also intimates that the formless, empty earth was already in existence at the time of Genesis 1:1, but takes verse 1 as an independent clause.⁸

Genesis 1:1 - A Summary Statement of the Chapter

Whereas Bible-believing Christians differ on the translation of Genesis 1:1, the weight of evidence favors the translating of it as an independent clause⁹ and understanding it as a summary statement of the creating work of the whole chapter.¹⁰ The opening phrase of Genesis, “in the beginning,” refers not to a time before the six days nor to the first day, but to all six days of creation¹¹. The initial period indicated by “in the beginning” is not just verse 1 but the whole first chapter.¹² Although many have suggested that Genesis 1:1 is describing the first event of creation rather than summarizing the creative activity of the six days, the Hebrew grammar makes this improbable.¹³ Genesis 1:1 could not be describing just the creation of the “formless” (Hebrew: *tohu*) world of Genesis 1:2 because Isaiah 45:18, which clearly alludes to the language

⁸ Cf. Longman, *Genesis*, 102-3; John H. Walton, *Genesis* (The NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 69.

⁹ Crucial to translating Genesis 1:1 is the grammatical form of the first Hebrew word *bereshit*, “in the beginning.” Here the issues are complicated and require some understanding of Hebrew to comprehend fully. (See Bill T. Arnold, *Encountering the Book of Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 25; Bill T. Arnold, “reshit,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 3:1025-26). If the word is in a grammatical form called the construct state, then Genesis 1:1 must be a dependent “when” clause as in the New Revised Standard Version. However if it is in the absolute state, the other grammatical possibility, then the verse must be an independent clause as in the traditional translation. What is most convincing in resolving this issue is that every single ancient version translates Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause. These, including the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament begun about 250 B.C.; Targum Onkelos, the official Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Pentateuch; the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Bible made by Jerome beginning in 382; and the three second century revisers of the Septuagint: Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, all translate the verse as an independent clause (Arnold, “reshit,” 3:1025-26; Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* [Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974], 30). The grammatical construction that Moses used for *bereshit*, “in the beginning,” is the only one which he could have used to indicate that the sentence was an independent clause. On the other hand, an alternative grammatical construction for “in the beginning” would have clearly indicated that the phrase was a dependent “when” clause (Waltke, *Creation*, 30). As a result, we can conclude that the traditional wording of the verse is correct.

For a full discussion of the grammatical issues, see Waltke, *Creation*, 18-36.

¹⁰ Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (rev. ed.; The Old Testament Library, eds. Peter Ackroyd, et al.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 49.

¹¹ Whereas the Hebrew word *reshit* can mean the beginning of something, in Genesis 1:1 it more likely means an initial period of time. Examples of this usage are Job 8:7 and Jeremiah 28:1. In Job 3:8 the “beginning” refers to Job’s life before his tribulations began. The word “beginning” in the phrase “in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah” in Jeremiah 28:1 does not refer to a point in time but to the initial period of a king’s reign which in a unique reckoning system was not counted as part of the king’s official reign (Walton, *Genesis*, 68; John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* [Sisters, Ore: Multnomah, 1996], 38-42; John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], 2:20-230.

¹² Walton, *Genesis*, 70.

¹³ See Waltke, *Genesis*, 58-59; Walton, *Genesis*, 70.

of Genesis 1 as shown in Chart 5, specifically states that God did not create the world *tohu* or “a waste land” as the word is translated there. The God of light would not create a world of darkness.¹⁴

That Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the whole chapter can be seen by comparing it with Genesis 2:1-3, the account of the seventh day and the final section of the introductory literary unit. When two sections of a passage are parallel to one other but in inverted order, it is called a chiasm. Chart 6 shows that, when the Hebrew word order is followed, Genesis 2:1-3 repeats the phrases of Genesis 1:1 except in reverse order, forming a chiasm. This not only clearly sets off Genesis 1:1-2:3 as a literary unit but also shows that Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the creation of all six days.¹⁵ Genesis 1:1-2:3 thus follows the normal Semitic tendency to state first a general proposition and then to give the particulars.¹⁶

Chart 6	
Chiasm of Genesis 1:1 and 2:1-3	
(Hebrew Word order)	
A	In the beginning created (1:1a)
B	God (1:1b)
C	the heavens and the earth. (1:1c)
C'	Thus the heavens and the earth were completed....(Gen 2:1)
B'	„ God(Gen 2:2)
A'	... created(Gen 2:3)

Genesis 1:2 - The Description of a Chaotic Earth Already Present

Since Genesis 1:1 is a summary of the creation of the entire chapter and since Isaiah 45:18 tells us that God did not initially create the earth as described in Genesis 1:2, Moses is assuming the dark, water-covered earth to be already in existence when he picks up the story at the beginning of Genesis (see footnote for details).¹⁷

¹⁴ Waltke, *Creation*, 52.

¹⁵ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 5, 36.

¹⁶ Waltke, *Creation*, 33.

¹⁷To understand the relationship between Genesis 1:1 and 2, it is important to remember that these verses were written in Hebrew, not English, and therefore must be understood in light of Hebrew grammar. God reveals himself in terms of the language, thought forms and culture of the initial audience to which a particular book of the Bible was initially written (David Wilkenson, *The Message of Creation: Encountering the Lord of the Universe* [BST; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002], 22).

One theoretical possibility is that Genesis 1:2 is a sequential clause after verse 1. Advocates of this view, popularly called the “gap theory,” translate Genesis 1:1-2 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and then the earth became....” Unfortunately this view does not stand up to a grammatical analysis of the Hebrew

The resulting structure of Genesis 1 is as follows:

- I. Introductory Summary Statement
- II. Pre-creation Situation 1:2
- III. Narrative of Creation 1:3-31¹⁸

text. For example, this view assumes that the “ands” beginning verses 2 and 3 both mean “and then.” The “and” beginning verse 3 does indicate sequence and in fact the grammatical construction is called “*waw* consecutive.” On the other hand, the “and” at the beginning of verse 2 is different in both form and function and cannot introduce a clause which is independent and sequential. In other words, the “and” beginning verse 2 cannot mean “and then” (Waltke, *Creation*, 20-22).

Another view of the relationship of verse 1 to verse 2 is that verse 2 indicates the state of the earth when it was created in verse 1. According to this view God originally created the earth formless (*tohu*) and void (*bohu*). However, Isaiah 45:18, clearly alluding to Genesis 1:1-2 as seen in Chart 5, specifically states that God did not create the earth *tohu* here translated “a waste place.” In addition, whereas the rest of creation is called into existence by the Word of God, there is no such reference in Genesis 1:2 (Waltke, *Creation*, 25). There is in fact no evidence that the earth as described in Genesis 1:2 is the result of God’s creating work (Gregory A Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997], 103).

The explanation of the opening verses of Genesis most consistent with their grammar is that verse 1 is an introductory independent clause and verse 2 is a circumstantial “when” clause associated with verse three, indicating that the chaotic state described in verse 2 was already in existence when the story is taken up in verse one. (Waltke, *Creation*, 32-36; von Rad, *Genesis*, 47; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 720; Walton, *Genesis*, 70). The resulting translation would be similar to that of the New International Version: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” The NET Bible translates these verses, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the water. God said, ‘Let there be light’” (2nd beta ed.).

In favor of this view is the fact that this grammatical construction is the same as Genesis 2:4-7, as shown in Chart 22. In both passages there is first an introductory statement of creation followed by a circumstantial clause with the Hebrew “and” followed by a noun and then the verb “was,” indicating an initial negative circumstance prior to creation. This is then followed by the main clause of the common Hebrew construction of the word “and” followed by a verb in the Hebrew imperfect tense indicating sequence and in both passages describing a creation (Waltke, *Creation*, 32-36). A parallel grammatical construction is found also in Genesis 3:1 (which introduces the creation of sin in the human race), although this passage does not have a separate introductory summary statement since it is a sub-story of the creation of man introduced by the summary statement of Genesis 2:4 (Waltke, *Creation*, 32-36). The opening sentences of contemporary Near Eastern creation stories similarly have parallel grammatical structures (Waltke, *Creation*, 33-35) and assume that matter was already present at the time of creation. (Longman, *Genesis*, 103).

Asserting that Genesis 1:1 begins the story of creation with a chaotic earth already present (Gen 1:2) is not suggesting that God did not create the heavens and the earth out of nothing. It is simply stating that Genesis 1:2 was not the first stage of creation (cf. Isa 45:18). The author of Hebrews 11:3 states unequivocally, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible" (Heb 11:3). The question is not whether God created the world *ex nihilo*, but when he did so.

Genesis 1:2 - A Description of an Earth under Judgment

Additional evidence that the dark earth of Genesis 1:2 cannot be the first stage of God's creation is the fact that throughout the Bible darkness consistently represents evil. Darkness is a symbol for wickedness (Prov 2:13; Isa 5:20), judgment (Exod 10:21; Isa 5:30; 8:22; Lam 3:2; Zeph 1:15) and death (Job 10:20-22; 17:13; Ps 88:11-12; Eccl 6:3-4).¹⁹ On the other hand, "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). Salvation itself is associated with light (Ps 27:1; Acts 26:28; 2 Cor 4:4-6). On the first day of creation only the light was called good (Gen 1:4)²⁰ and the darkness was what remained of the chaos of Genesis 1:2²¹.

The dark, water-covered earth of Genesis 2:2 is in direct contrast to God's final creation described in the book of Revelation. On the new earth "there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them" (Rev 22:5) and "there is no longer any sea" (Rev 21:1). In other words, the Bible

Chart 22				
Grammatical Parallels in Genesis 1-3				
		Genesis 1	Genesis 2	Genesis 3
I	Introductory Summary Statement	vs 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.	vs 4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created....	(2:4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created⁵....)
II	Circumstantial clause of the pattern (Hebrew) <i>w</i> ("and" in the sense of "now") + Noun + Verb <i>hayah</i> ("was") indicating an initial negative circumstance prior to a creation	vs 2 Now² the earth was formless....	vss 5-6 Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth....	vs 1a Now the serpent was
III	Main clause of <i>waw</i> consecutive (a very common Hebrew construction beginning with the word "and" + a verb in the imperfect tense) indicating sequence and here describing a creation ¹	vs 3 And³ God said....	vs 7 And⁴ the LORD God formed man....	vs 1b And he said.... ^{6,7}

¹Bruce K. Waltke, *Creation and Chaos* (Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1974), 32-36.
²Translation of Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 34.
³Translation of Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 34.
⁴Translation of Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 33.
⁵This section does not have a separate introductory summary statement since it is a substory of the creation stories regarding man introduced by Genesis 2:4 (Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 33).
⁶Genesis 3:1ff. describes the creation of sin in the human race (Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 35).
⁷The opening lines of contemporary Near Eastern creation stories also have parallel grammatical structures (Waltke, *Creation and Chaos*, 33-35).

¹⁸ Waltke, *Creation*, 36.

¹⁹ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 16; Sarna, *Genesis*, 7.

²⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 18.

²¹ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 52.

begins with a dark, water-covered earth and ends with a new earth where all is light and where the only water is the river of the water of life (Rev 21: 1).

The reversal of darkness and light from the beginning to the end of history is illustrated another way in Chart 7. The Bible begins with a dark earth and the God of light hidden behind the curtain of the heavens (Ps 104:1-2), whereas the new creation is pictured as a God-illuminated earth (Rev 21:1,3; 22:5) with the wicked being cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 22:13). This is also seen in Chart 8 where the final destiny of God's

Chart 7

The Reversal of Darkness and Light from the Beginning to the End of History

The Beginning

Darkness

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep.... (Gen 1:2)

The End

Light

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.... And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them.... And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need for the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them.... (Rev 21:1,3; 22:5)

God's Light Behind the Curtain of the Heavens

O LORD my God, You are very great;
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
covering Thyself with light as with a cloak,
stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain...(Ps 104:1-2).

Outer Darkness

"...throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt 22:13).

Chart 8

God's Final Separation in Light of Genesis 1:2

The Initial Description of the Earth

	Darkness		Deep/Waters/Lake/Sea
Gen 1:2b	... darkness	Gen 1:2c	was over the surface of the deep ...over the surface of the waters.

The Final Destiny of God's Enemies

		Rev 20:15	And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown (Greek: <i>ballo</i>) into the lake of fire.
Matt 22:13	"... throw (Greek: <i>ekballo</i>) him into the outer darkness ; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."		

The Final Destiny of God's People

		Rev 21:1	And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer <i>any</i> sea.
Rev 21:23-25	And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ...for there shall be no night there....		

enemies is the exact opposite of that of his people in terms of darkness and the nautical terms of deep, lake and sea. The destiny of God's enemies is the lake of fire (Rev 20:15) in outer darkness (Matt 22:13) whereas for God's people on the new earth there will be no night (Rev 21:23-25) and no sea (Rev 21:1).

What is most significant in comparing Genesis 1:2 to the book of Revelation is that the last of the four visions through which God revealed himself to the apostle John (21:9-22:17)²² shows how God ultimately will reverse all the negative conditions of the earth described in Genesis 1:2. This is summarized in Chart 9. Instead of a formless earth (Gen 1:2a), Revelation 21:9-23 describes the form of the new earth. Instead of an empty earth (Gen 1:2b), the next verses in Revelation describe the filled new earth (Rev 21:24-27). Revelation 22:5 next indicates God's light to be the ultimate antidote to the darkness of Genesis 1:2. And corresponding to the reference to the Spirit and the waters in Genesis 1:2, Revelation 22:17, the final verse in the vision, proclaims, "The **Spirit** and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the **water** of life without cost (author's emphasis)."

²² Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 32-35.

Chart 9

The Content of the Fourth and Final Vision of Revelation, 21:9-22:17, against the Background of Genesis 1:2

Genesis 1:2

The earth was formless

and void,

and darkness

was over the surface of the deep,

and the Spirit of God

was moving over the surface of the waters.

Revelation 21-22

21:9-23 The Formed New Earth

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. *There were* three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them *were* the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, *according to* human measurements, which are *also* angelic *measurements*. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp *is* the Lamb.

21:24-27 The Filled New Earth

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; and nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22:5 The Light of the New Earth

And there shall no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

22:1-4 The Water of the New Earth

Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds of* fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him and they will see His face, and His name *will be* on their foreheads.

22:17a The Spirit's Invitation

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come."

22:17b to the Water of Life

And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Lastly, Revelation 21:23-22:5 is written in the form of a chiasm, an inverted parallelism, and again illustrates how the final glorious new earth is the exact opposite of the chaotic earth described in Genesis 1:2. This is shown in Chart 10.

Genesis 1:1-2 itself forms a chiasm as found in Chart 11.²³ In a chiasm the central propositions are what are being emphasized. In the chiasm of Genesis 1:1-2 the emphasis is on the negative conditions of the chaotic world.

In light of all the accumulated evidence, it is possible to conclude that the earth of Genesis 1:2 could not be the initial creation of a God who only creates what is good (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). God would not create an earth such as this (Isa 45:18)²⁴.

If God did not create the earth as described in Genesis 1:2, what is the explanation for its being in this condition? The answer is found in Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 34:11, the two other Bible passages beside Genesis 1:2 that contain both the words “formless” and “void.” In each of these texts these terms are applied to the results of a catastrophic divine judgment.

A comparison of Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Jeremiah 4:23-26 is found in Charts 12 and 13.²⁵ The context of Jeremiah 4 is that God is pronouncing judgments upon his rebellious people (Jer 4:13). Verses 23-26 are part of a lament over Judah’s coming destruction at the hands of the Babylonian armies (Jer 4:12). In this setting God likens the destruction of Jerusalem and Judah (Jer 4:4) in his wrath to returning creation to the *tohu* and *bohu* of Genesis 1:2 (Jer 4: 26). Creation will be reversed in judgment.

The other passage in the Old Testament that pairs “formless” and “void,” is Isaiah 34:11 which is a description of the Lord’s “day of vengeance” against Edom (Isa 34:8). Here, regarding their land (Isa 34:9), God states that “He shall stretch over it the line of desolation (Hebrew: *tohu*) and the plumb line of emptiness (Hebrew: *bohu*)” (Isa 34:11). In other words, the plumb line which normally would be a tool of construction is here one of destruction and judgment.²⁶ The judgment of a day of the Lord is once again likened to a reversal of creation.

Since in both Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 34:11 *tohu* and *bohu* describe the results of God’s cataclysmic judgment upon his enemies in a day of his wrath, one would expect to find the

²³ Joel W. Rosenberg, “Kingship vs. Kinship: Political Allegory in the Bible – A New Reading of Gen 1-3 and Related Texts” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1978), 11.

²⁴ Cf. E.A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Anchor Bible 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), 12-13.

²⁵ Adapted from Michael Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern,” *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) : 152 cited by Waltke, *Creation*, 12.

²⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 615.

same to be true of Genesis 1:2, and that is indeed the case. We will see shortly who the enemies were who were the cause of God's turning creation into chaos before beginning his (re-)creation of the heavens and the earth.

The Cause of the Dark, Water-covered Earth of Genesis 1:2

Having established that Genesis 1:2 describes the state of the earth at the time of the creation of the present earth, one must next determine what precipitated God's judgment. If one

Chart 10

The Chiasm of Revelation 21:23-22:5 against the Background of Genesis 1:2

<u>Genesis 1:2</u>	<u>Revelation 21:23-22:5</u>
...darkness	A And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it , and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light , and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; (21:12-26)
was over the face ¹	B and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (21:23-27)
of the deep;	C And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb , in the middle of its street. (22:1-2a)
of the deep;	D On either side of the river was the tree of life, (22:2b)
	E bearing twelve <i>kinds of fruit</i> , (22:2c)
	E' yielding its fruit every month; (22:2d)
	D' and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse ² ; (22:2e-3a)
was over the face ¹	C' and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it,
	B' and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face , and His name will be on their foreheads. (22:3b-4)
...darkness	A' And there shall no longer be any night; and they shall not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun , because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. (22:5) ³

¹NASB margin and the literal meaning of the Hebrew word.

²Revelation 22:3a clarifies Revelation 22:2b, lest anyone might think that the leaves of the tree of life were for healing from any results of the curse.

³Revelation 21:23-22:5, the final descriptive section in the Bible shows how God has diametrically forever changed the initial condition of the earth found in Genesis 1:2. Instead of darkness, the glory of God illumines the earth (Rev 21:23) and there will be no night there (Rev 21:25). Instead of the deep covering the earth, the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev 22:1).

Chart 11

The Chiasm of Genesis 1:1-2

- A In the beginning **God** created the heavens and the earth.
B The earth was formless and void,
B' and darkness was over the surface of the deep;¹
A' and the Spirit of **God** was moving over the surface of the waters.²

¹Typically, whatever is placed in the middle of a chiasm is its most important statement(s), in this case the description of the formless, void, dark, water-covered earth.

²Adapted from Joel W. Rosenberg, "Kingship vs. Kinship: Political Allegory in the Bible - A New Reading of Gen. 1-3 and Related Texts" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 1978), 11.

Chart 12

The Return of Creation to Chaos under God's Fierce Anger in Jeremiah 4:23-26

	<u>Creation</u>	<u>Becomes Chaos</u>
vs 23a	Earth	Formless and Void
vs 23b	Heavens	No Light
vs 24a	Mountains	Shaking ¹
vs 25a	Man	No Man
vs 25b	Birds	Fled
vs 26a	Fruitful Land	A Wilderness
vs 26b	Cities	Pulled Down ²

¹A technical term for the final shaking of the world at the return of chaos (Brevard S. Childs, "The Enemy from the North and the Chaos Tradition," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 78 [1959]: 197).

²Adapted from Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) 152 in Waltke, "Creation," 132:141.

asks the question whether there is any similar description elsewhere in the Bible of a dark, water-covered earth, the answer is "Yes, Noah's flood."²⁷

What triggered the flood? The primary cause of the flood was the incident recorded in Genesis 6: 1-4 where "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they

²⁷ Cf. Boyd, *God*, 111.

took wives for themselves.” Christians differ in their interpretations of this passage but what appears to be determinative is that the expression "sons of God" in the Old Testament

Chart 13

Parallels Between Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Jeremiah 4:23-26

<u>Day of Creation</u>		<u>Genesis 1-2</u>		<u>Jeremiah 4</u>
Precreation	1:2	Formless and Void	vs 23a	Formless and Void
First	1:3-5	Light	vs 23c	Light
Second	1:6-8	Heavens	vs 23b	Heavens
Third	1:9-13	Earth	vs 24	Mountains and Hills
Fourth	1:14-19	Luminaries	vs 23c	Light
Fifth	1:20-23	Birds	vs 25b	Birds
Sixth	1:26-31	Man	vs 25a	Man
Seventh	2:1-3	Sabbath	vs 26	God's Fierce Anger ¹

¹Adapted from Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21 (1971) 152 in Waltke, "Creation," 132:141.

refers to angels (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).²⁸ The angels of Genesis 6:2 fell from their position in heaven and married women.²⁹ The passage that seems to confirm the interpretation that this

²⁸ There are three primary interpretations of the identity of the "Sons of God" (Gen. 6:2, 4). The first of these is that the Sons of God are men from the godly line of Seth. It is argued that the descendants of Seth represent God's true people (Gen. 4:26) and so rightly can be called "the sons of God" (Gen. 6:2). Therefore the sin of the godly sons of Seth was to take wives indiscriminately from the daughters of men (Gen. 6:2). However, the sons of God in Genesis 6:2 are contrasted with "men" (Gen. 6:1), (Hebrew: *haadam*), the Adamic race. This would eliminate the possible identification of the "sons of God" with the descendants of Seth. (D. W. B. Robinson, "Sons Children) of God," *The New Bible Dictionary*, 1st ed., 1206.). The normal meaning of the term "sons of God" is "angels" (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7; Dan. 3:25, 28) and there is nothing in the text to cause the reader to assume anything different (Kidner, *Genesis*, 84).

Another view states that the sons of God are royalty. This is a very old view. Targum Onkelos translates "sons of God" (Gen. 6:2, 4) as "Sons of lords" (Sailhamer, "Genesis," II, 76). (Targums were Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament read in the synagogue service after the reading of Scripture for the benefit of those who only understood Aramaic. Targum Onkelos was the official Targum on the Pentateuch and dates from the second or third century A..D.) Ancient texts attest to an ideology of divine kingship, and human kings were called sons of various gods. In this view the sin is that of polygamy as kings inducted "whomever they chose" (Gen. 6:2) into their royal harems. (Meredith G. Kline, "Genesis," *The New Bible Commentary, Revised* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970], 87). However, it would be puzzling why subjects as familiar as kingship and polygamy would be discussed so indirectly (Kidner, *Genesis*, 84).

The view that seems to explain the Biblical data the best is that the sons of God were angels who fell into sin. In addition to the arguments given in the text, in Daniel 3 "a son of the gods" (vs. 25) is identified as an angel (vs. 28). The craving of demons for a body seen in the gospels (Luke 11:24-26, etc.) offers a parallel to their apparent hunger for sexual experience (Kidner, *Genesis*, 84). Of great significance is the fact that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament from as early as 250 B. C., translates "sons of God" sometimes by "angels of God" shows that this interpretation was held at a very early time. The version of the Septuagint found in the Codex Alexandrinus (c. 450 A.D.) translates sons of God "angels" in Genesis 6:2. This interpretation is also found in the Book of Enoch (200-0 B.C.), Philo (1st century A.D.), Josephus (1st century A.D.), most rabbinical writers and in the oldest church fathers, Justin (100-165 A.D.), Tertullian (160/70 - 215/20 A.D.), Cyprian (200/10 - 258 A.D.), and Ambrose (339-397 A.D.).

For a full discussion, see Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 262-65, 271-72 and Boyd, *God*, 138-40.

passage is speaking of fallen angels taking human wives is Jude 6-7. There Jude writes, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire." The sin of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah was homosexuality (Gen 19:4-5) in going "after strange flesh." They did this according to Jude "in the same way as these" fallen angels "went after strange flesh." To what other incident would this refer, than to the angels of Genesis 6 going "after the strange flesh" (Jude 7) of "the daughters of men" (Gen 6:2)?

Peter in his discussion of these same angels writes, "... God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment" (2 Pet 2:4). He then immediately in the same sentence goes on to discuss Noah's flood, "and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Pet 2:5), the two events apparently being linked together in his mind.

Since the sin which brought on the flood was a fall of angels, it is reasonable to investigate whether the original fall of Satan was the event that precipitated the water-covered earth of Genesis 1:2. Genesis does not tell us when Satan's fall occurred. Certainly it was before Genesis 3:1 where Satan appears as the serpent in the garden of Eden. It is theoretically possible that the fall of the angels may have occurred between Genesis 1:1 and 3:1, but, if it did, it was a major event which went unmentioned.

A positive clue to the time of the fall of Satan is found in Revelation 12:3 where we are introduced to a "dragon having seven heads." To ensure that the reader understands exactly who is being symbolized by the dragon, John identifies him in verse 9 of the chapter as "the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan." The ancient Near East was familiar with a seven-headed snake/dragon named Lotan who was the enemy of the gods in ancient Ugaritic myths³⁰. That Lotan is the Ugaritic equivalent of the Bible's Leviathan, "the Twisting One,"³¹ is shown in Chart 14 which compares Isaiah 27:1 to the Ugaritic statement, "When you smote Lotan the

²⁹ The objection is often made that according to Matthew 22:30 angels do not marry. However, this verse is only speaking of unfallen angels.

³⁰ Ugarit was an ancient city state on the Mediterranean Sea in what is today modern day Lebanon. Texts discovered there from the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B. C. have provided the most detailed information available regarding the culture of Canaan. For more information regarding Ugarit, see M. Liverani, "Ugarit; Ugaritic," *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., 3:937.

³¹ Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132(1975): 33.

fleeing serpent, you made an end of the twisting serpent, the mighty one of the seven heads.”³² Isaiah 27: 1 using parallel terminology states, “In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, with His fierce and great and mighty sword, even Leviathan the twisted serpent; and He will kill the dragon who *lives* in the sea.” The smitten Leviathan/Lothan is described in both passages a “the fleeing serpent” and “the twisting/twisted serpent.” The Ugaritic passage adds the important detail that Leviathan/Lothan has seven heads, the same number as the dragon/serpent of Revelation 12:3.³³ The fact that Isaiah alluded to the tradition of Ugarit from centuries earlier is an indication that the Ugaritic myth was a pagan corruption of an ancient saying of God’s people.

Chart 14	
A Ugaritic Parallel to Isaiah 27:1	
<u>Isaiah 27:1</u>	<u>UT, 67:I:1-3¹</u>
In that day the LORD will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent , With His fierce and great and mighty sword, Even Leviathan the twisted serpent ; And He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea.	When you smote Lotan the fleeing serpent , you made an end of the twisting serpent the mighty one of the seven heads.
¹ Cited by G. P. Hugenberger, “Leviathan,” ISBE, rev. ed.; 3:109.	

Rahab,³⁴ meaning “the Proud One,”³⁵ is another name for Leviathan,³⁶ pride being one of the reasons for Satan’s fall (Ezek 28:17).³⁷ In Hebrew poetry, parallel statements are often

³² UT , 67: I:1-3, cited by G. P. Hugenberger, “Leviathan,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. 3:109.

³³In Psalm 74:14 there is a reference to “the heads (plural) of Leviathan” without a specific number being given.

³⁴ Rahab the dragon/sea monster is not to be confused with Rahab the heroine of the fall of Jericho whose name is spelled differently in Hebrew.

³⁵ Waltke , “Creation , “ 132:32.

³⁶ Not only are Leviathan and Rahab described as having similar roles as the enemy in connection with the chaos of Genesis 1:2, but both are labeled “the fleeing serpent,” Rahab in Job 26: 12-13 and Leviathan in Psalm 89:10.

³⁷ Although the interpretation of Ezekiel 28:11-19 is disputed, it is likely that these verses include a reference to Satan. The prophecy is “a lamentation over the king of Tyre” (Ezek 28:12). Ezekiel used the word “king” infrequently and therefore its use here instead of the word “leader” (NASB) or “prince” (ESV) used in Ezekiel 28:2 is significant. In verses 11-19, Ezekiel describes this “king” in terms that would not apply to a man. This “king” was present in the Garden of Eden (v. 13), had been a heavenly cherub (v. 14a), had access to the holy mountain of God (v 14b), and was created sinless. When the immediate hearers would have heard of the “King of Tyre,” they would

synonymous and both Leviathan and Rahab are used in parallel in poetic passages to the Hebrew word *tannin* (Ps 74:13 and Isa 27:1 of Leviathan; Isa 51:9 of Rahab) translated “dragon” in Isaiah 27:1 and 51:9 and “sea monster(s)” in Psalm 74:13³⁸. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Greek word which is used to translate *tannin* in the Isaiah passages is *drakon*,³⁹ the word translated “dragon” throughout Revelation 12. In other words, Leviathan and Rahab thus are names applied to Satan in several passages.

Revelation 12:3-4 informs us that when Satan the dragon originally rebelled against God, one-third of the angels joined him.⁴⁰ He dispatched his angelic allies, now demons, to the earth as his invading army (Rev 12:4). Far from a random act, Satan’s goal from the beginning of his revolt was to be the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4; cf. Isa 14:13-14). That was the reason he asked Eve whether she would like to “be like God” (Gen 3:4). He felt that what had motivated him to rebel against God (Isa 14:14b) would motivate her as well. Satan’s agenda from the time of his fall was to be ruler of the world (John 12:31).

In several texts⁴¹ such as are shown in Chart 15, God is pictured as in conflict with the dragon. In these passages, God is described as defeating the dragon/Leviathan/Rahab in the context of the chaotic earth of Genesis 1:2.⁴² It is significant that the term “dragon” is used in Revelation 12:3-4, a passage describing his initial fall. Apparently the fall of Satan and his angels to the earth (Rev 12:3-4) preceded Genesis 1, and Genesis 1:2 describes the results of God’s judgment on them and the earth they had made their headquarters. God’s response to the fall of Satan and his angels was the same as his response to the second fall of angels in Genesis 6:1-4. In both cases he sent a flood that was a reversal of creation.

When one understands Genesis 1:2 as describing God’s response to the fall of Satan, the story line of the Bible becomes complete from beginning to end. It begins with Satan throwing

have thought of the god of the city. The god of the city was Malcart whose name means “king of the city.” The gods of the cities were demons (Deut 32:17). Apparently the god of Tyre was Satan. See Charles H.D. Dyer, “Ezekiel” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck; Wheaton: Victor, 1985), 1:1283.

³⁸ F. A. Spina, “Rahab,” *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed. 4:34.

³⁹ In the Septuagint of Psalm 74:13 the phrase mentioning to the dragon/sea monsters was omitted.

⁴⁰ In the book of Revelation stars symbolize angels. The reader is informed in the very first chapter of the book that “the seven stars” which Jesus held in his right hand (Rev 1:16) “are the angels of the seven churches” (Rev 1:20). Satan himself is symbolized by a star in Revelation 8:10 and 9:1 as he is also in Isaiah 14:12.

⁴¹ Allusions to God’s conflict with a dragon are found in Job 9, 26; Psalms 74, 89, 93, 104, Isaiah 27, 51 (Maarten J. Paul, “Leviathan,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2:779).

⁴² For a further discussion of the defeat of the dragon at creation, see Waltke, “Creation,” 132:33-36; Boyd, God, 73-113; Mary Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Cyrus H. Gordon, “Leviathan: Symbol of Evil” in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, ed. Alexander Altman (Cambridge: Harvard, 1966), 1-9.

his angelic co-conspirators to the first earth (Rev 12:3-4) and ends with a new earth (Rev 21:1) and Satan being “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev 20:10). The pattern of events evidenced in relation to Genesis 1:2 will repeat itself at least three more times in the future as outlined in Chart 16. In connection with the crucifixion, the second coming of Christ and the consummation of the age there will be a fall of Satan, darkness, a voice from heaven, a reference to heaven/the splitting of a veil, an earthquake and a subsequent reference to light. These events will all be discussed in later chapters.

Chart 15

The Defeat of Rahab/Leviathan in the Context of the Creation Account of Genesis 1

<u>Genesis 1</u>	<u>Psalm 89</u>	<u>Job 26</u>	<u>Psalm 74</u>
vs 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth .		vs 7 "He stretches out the north over empty space And hangs the earth on nothing.	vs 12 Yet God is my king from of old, Who works deeds of deliverance in the midst of the earth .
vs 2 ...and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over (Hebrew: 'al) the surface of the waters .	vs 9 You rule the swelling of the sea ; When its waves rise, You still them.	vs 12a "He quieted the sea with His power, vs 10 "He has inscribed a circle on (Hebrew: 'al) the surface of the waters At the boundary of light and darkness .	vs 13 You divided the sea by Your strength ¹ ; You broke the heads of the sea monsters in the waters . vs 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan.... vs 16b You have prepared the light
vs 3 Then God said, "Let there be light "; and there was light . vs 4 ...God separated the light from the darkness . vs 5 God called the light day , and the darkness He called night . vs 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so.		vs 8 "He wraps up the waters in His clouds, And the cloud does not burst under them. vs 12b And by His understanding He shattered Rahab . vs 13b His hand has pierced the fleeing serpent. vs 13a "By His breath the heavens are cleared;	vs 16a Yours is the day , Yours also is the night ;
vs 8 God called the expanse heaven . vs 10 God called the dry land earth	vs 10 You Yourself crushed Rahab like one who is slain; You scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm. vs 11 The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all it contains, You have founded them. vs 12 The north and the south, You have created them....		vs 17 You have established all the boundaries of the earth ; You have made summer and winter. vs 16c and the sun.
vs 14 Then God said, "Let there be lights... for seasons.... vs 16 God made... the greater light ... and the lesser light....		vs 9 "He obscures the face of the full moon....	

¹The psalmist likens the deliverance through the Red Sea to the creation account in Genesis 1.

Chart 16

The Pattern of Genesis 1:2-8 Repeats Itself

	<u>Creation</u>	<u>Crucifixion</u>	<u>Coming Again</u>	<u>Consummation</u>
A Fall of Satan	Rev 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold a great red dragon.... Rev 12:9 ...who is called the devil and Satan Rev 12:4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars ¹ of heaven , and threw them to the earth . ³	Luke 10:18 "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning." ...now the ruler of this world will be cast out . ⁴	Rev 9:1a ...I saw Rev 8:10 ...a great star fell from heaven and the stars will fall from the sky ² Rev 9:1b a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth	Rev 20:10 And the devil ... Rev 21:23 was thrown into the lake of fire.... The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it ⁷ Rev 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. ¹² Rev 21:1 ... the first earth passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be any night , and they will not have need of... the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....
Darkness	Gen 1:2b and darkness was over the surface of the deep ⁵	Matt 27:45 Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon the whole land until the ninth hour. ⁶	Matt 24:29a ...the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light,	Rev 21:23 was thrown into the lake of fire.... The city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it ⁷ Rev 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. ¹² Rev 21:1 ... the first earth passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be any night , and they will not have need of... the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....
Voice from Heaven	Gen 1:3 Then God said , "Let there be light."	John 12:28 There came ...a voice out of heaven : "I have both glorified it (i.e. My name ⁸), and will glorify it again." ⁹	1 Thess 4:16 ...the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout....	Rev 21:5 And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. ¹² Rev 21:1 ... the first earth passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be any night , and they will not have need of... the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....
A Separating	Gen 1:7 God... separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. Gen 1:8 And God called the expanse heaven . Gen 1:2a And the earth was formless and void,	Matt 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ¹⁰	Rev 6:14 The sky ¹¹ was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up....	Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. ¹² Rev 21:1 ... the first earth passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be any night , and they will not have need of... the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....
Earthquake	Gen 1:8 And God called the expanse heaven . Gen 1:2a And the earth was formless and void,	Matt 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ¹⁰	Matt 24:27b and every mountain and island moved out of their places. ¹⁴ so will	Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. ¹² Rev 21:1 ... the first earth passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be any night , and they will not have need of... the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....
Light	Gen 1:4 ...and God separated the light from the darkness.	Matt 28:1 ...as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.... Matt 28:2 an angel of the Lord descended from heaven.... Matt 28:3 And his appearance was like lightning	Matt 24:27a the coming of the Son of Man be. ¹⁵ For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west,	Rev 21:10 And he... showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Rev 21:11 having the glory of God. ¹² Rev 21:1 ... the first earth passed away.... Rev 22:5 And there will no longer be any night , and they will not have need of... the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them....

¹In the book of Revelation stars often symbolize angels (Rev 1:20) but can also represent physical stars. An example of this is in the third through the fifth trumpets (Rev 8:10-9:1). In the third (Rev 8:10-11) and fifth trumpet (Rev 9:1) the falling star is an allusion to Satan in Isaiah 14:12 ("How have you fallen from heaven, O star of the morning"), whereas in the fourth trumpet (Rev 8:12) stars represent the stars of heaven, being a parallel to Matthew 24:29, etc.

²The Greek word translated "Sky in Matthew 24:29, *ouranos*, is the same word translated heaven in Revelation 12:4 and Luke 12:31.

³If the original fall of Satan occurred after the creation of Genesis 1, it was a very major event which was not mentioned in the creation story. On the other hand, since the water covered earth of Genesis 7:19-20 was triggered by God's judgment on the fall of angels to the earth (Gen 6:1-6; cf. Jude 6--7), the water covered earth of Genesis 1:2 may similarly have been the result of God's judgment on the earth when it was first invaded by Satan and his horde of one-third of the angels of heaven who fell with him.

⁴On the basis of the victory of Christ on the cross, Satan will be cast out of heaven where he now has access (Job 1:6-12). According to Revelation 12:6-14, this will occur three and one half years before the second coming of Christ.

⁵The Bible begins with a dark, water covered earth.

⁶The darkening of the sun is a sign of a day of the Lord (Joel 2:31), which is a day of God's wrath (Zeph 2:31). The crucifixion was a day of the Lord, a day of God's wrath upon his Son, who was experiencing God's wrath vicariously for the sins of his people.

⁷The Bible begins with a dark water-covered earth (Gen 1:2) and ends with an earth with no night (Rev 21:25 and no sea (Rev 21:1).

⁸In Judaism a person's name represented his total character.

⁹Jesus spoke these words just before the Last Supper (John 13:1ff. and His crucifixion which was His glory (Cf. Mark 10:37;15:27). In the holy place of the temple there was a lampstand whose purpose was "to shed light" (Exod 25:37) continually. This anticipates the lamp of the temple/throne room of the New Jerusalem where "the glory of God illumined it and its lamp is the Lamb" (Rev 21:23). Even during Jesus' earthly ministry he could say, "I am the light of the world...." (John 8:12), and John could testify, "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). Cf. Gen 1:3.

¹⁰The splitting of the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place in the temple symbolized that every believer now as direct access to God because of Christ as our Great High Priest who once for all offered Himself as the sacrifice for His people (Heb 7:27; 9:11-28). Only once a year could a Jewish high priest enter the Holy of Holies (Lev 16;23:26-32; Num 29:7-11), but now, as every believer is a priest (1Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10), all God's people now have direct access to God in His temple/throne room (Heb 4:14-16).

¹¹Just as once a year the high priest on the day of atonement passed out of sight of the people through the veil into the Holy of Holies (Lev 16:15,17), so Christ our "great high priest... passed through the heavens" the veil of the heavenly sanctuary, out of the sight of his watching disciples (Acts 1:9-11) (NASB Study Bible, 1787). The primary color of the veil of the temple was blue along with purple and scarlet, all colors of the heavenly veil (Exod 26:31). (The Greek word for sky is *ouranos*, usually translated heaven.)

¹²The new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2) is described as 1390 mile cube, a huge holy of holies (Rev 21:16), the temple/throne room of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb (Rev 21:22). The progression is therefore that following the crucifixion the veil of the temple split apart giving all of God's people access to the way into the holy of holies (Matt 27:51), then just prior to the second coming the veil of the heavenly temple will be split apart allowing all mankind to see into the holy of holies of the heavenly sanctuary (Rev 6:14; Matt 24:29; 26:64), and then finally the heavenly holy of holies comes to earth as the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2,10-22:5).

¹³Note that days 1-3 of creation are alluded to in order and are prefaced by an allusion to Gen 1:2.

¹⁴Cf. Rev 6:12.

¹⁵Into the darkness of the day of the Lord (Matt 24:29), the Son of Man will come like a bolt of lightning.

The Spirit's Presence in Genesis 1:2

The second verse of Genesis, however, is not all negative. It ends with the words “and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.” Here the Hebrew word *rachap*, translated “moving” in the NASB, would be better translated “hovering” (NASB margin) as the only other usage of this verb in the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy 32:11, uses it to describe an eagle hovering protectively over its young, as shown in Chart 17. There Moses uses the tender care of an eagle for its young as a metaphor for the Glory-cloud hovering protectively over Israel throughout its wilderness wanderings. (In Deuteronomy 32:10, the preceding verse, the word translated “waste” [NASB] is *tohu* the same Hebrew word as translated “formless” in Genesis 1:2, confirming the allusion to Genesis 1:2 in Deuteronomy 32:10-11). Similarly in Exodus 19:4 God tells Israel, “I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself.”⁴³

Chart 17

Parallels Between Genesis 1:2 and Deuteronomy 32:10-12

<u>Genesis 1</u>		<u>Deuteronomy 32</u>	
vs 2	The earth (Heb: 'eres) was formless (Heb: <i>tohu</i> ¹) and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep,	vs 9	For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.
	and the Spirit of God was moving (Heb: <i>rachap</i> ²) over the surface of the waters.	vs 10	He found him in a desert land (Heb: 'eres), and in the howling waste (Heb: <i>tohu</i> ¹) of a wilderness;
			He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of his eye.
		vs 11	Like an eagle that stirs its nest, that hovers (Heb: <i>rachap</i> ²) over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.
		vs 12	The LORD alone guided him....

¹These are the only two usages of this word in the Pentateuch.

²These are the only two usages of this word in the Pentateuch.

The Spirit of God led Israel by the pillar of cloud by day and by the pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:21-22). The book of Exodus ends with the statement, “For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel” (Exod 40:38).

⁴³ Cf. Isaiah 63:9, “Because of his love and pity he redeemed them himself, lifting them and carrying them all the days of old.”

Since it was the Glory-cloud that led Israel throughout its wilderness wanderings and since it is the function of the Holy Spirit to lead God's people (Rom 8:14), it is natural for the Spirit to be associated with the cloud. However, more frequently it is the Lord himself who is seen in connection with the cloud (Exod 13:21; 14:24; 16:10; 19:9; 24:16; 33:9; 34:5; 40: 34, 38; Lev 16:2; Num 9:18-20; 16:42; Deut 5:22; 31:15).⁴⁴

To describe the Glory-cloud with the figure of spreading wings (Deut 32:11) is not related simply to the cloud's overspreading protection, but also to the composition of the cloud itself. According to Ezekiel (1:1-28; 10:1-22; 11:22-24; 43:1-7) when the inner reality of the Glory-cloud is revealed, we see the Lord in His heaven. There in the cloud, the King of glory is enthroned in the midst of the winged cherubim (Ezek 1:5-14; 10:9-22), so that the sound of the cloud is the sound of their wings (Ezek 1:24; 10:5).⁴⁵ The Glory-cloud is the invisible heaven brought into cloud-enveloped visibility. This is the royal palace (1 Kings 22:19; Job 1:6; 2:1; Isa 6:1-13; Dan 7:9-10; Rev 4:2-11). As the house of the divine King, it is a temple/throne room.⁴⁶ It is the dwelling place of God.

Moses no doubt wrote Genesis during the wilderness wanderings of Israel when he had only to look up to see the Glory-cloud hovering over the tabernacle. (Exod 40:38) By quoting the language of Deuteronomy 32:10-11 in Genesis 1:2, he indicates that the very same Glory-cloud, at which he was looking, hovered over the earth when creation began. Thus Moses' reference to the hovering of the Spirit of God in Genesis 1:2 is to be understood as designating the Glory-cloud. Just as the Lord superintended Israel through their forty years of judgment from the Glory-cloud, he similarly ruled the chaotic earth under his judgment from the Glory-cloud (Gen 1:2). It is significant that the Bible both begins with an allusion to God's glory in its second verse and ends in Revelation with four references to it in its final two chapters.⁴⁷

Genesis 1:2 as the Primal Day of the Lord

Understanding that the picture of the Glory-cloud hovering over the earth is a picture of God's rule over all aspects of the earth is helpful in identifying Genesis 1:2 as the primal day of the Lord. A day of the Lord is a day when the Lord pours out his wrath on his enemies.

Zephaniah defines a day of the Lord (1:14) in this way: "A day of wrath is that day, a day of

⁴⁴ Second Corinthians 3:17 shows the close identification between the Lord and the Spirit, "Now the Lord is the Spirit."

⁴⁵ Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 14.

⁴⁶ In the ancient Near East divine glory was frequently represented as a winged disk which represented the canopy of the heavens with its (storm) clouds (Kline, *Images*, 17-18).

⁴⁷ Revelation 21:11, 23, 24, 25.

trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness” (Zeph 1:15). It is interesting to note that Genesis 1:2 has all of these features including a cloud. In the New Testament’s description of the final day of the Lord (1 Thess 5:1-2), initiated by the Lord’s return (1 Thess 4:16), once again clouds are a prominent feature (1 Thess 4:17).

Throughout both Old and New Testaments the precursor of the day of the Lord is the darkening of sun and moon (Joel 2:10-11; 2:31; 3:14-15; Isa 13:9-19; Rev 6:12-17), as illustrated in Chart 18. According to Genesis 1:16-18, God delegated to the sun and moon the governance

of day and night (Gen 1:16-18). However, the significance of the sun and moon being darkened is that they have at least temporarily then ceased their reign over the day and night, thus returning the situation to that of Genesis 1:2 where the Lord in the Glory-cloud ruled all of reality. With the darkening of sun and moon, the rule of the day and night now reverts back to the Lord, the Spirit, as in 1:2 where the Lord in the Glory-cloud ruled the darkened deep. Since a day of the Lord is a day not ruled by the sun but by the Lord, Genesis 1:2 describes the first day of the Lord.⁴⁸ The first day of the Lord came in response to the first sin.

The Purposes of God First Demonstrated

In the day of the Lord on the demon-invaded earth pictured in Genesis 1:2, we have an initial indication of what will be God's two primary purposes throughout Scripture. From the beginning Satan and his demons sought dominion over the earth and immediately took possession of it. The story line of the Bible thus beginning in Genesis 1:2 shows God's response to this challenge. His two primary purposes from the initial rebellion onward are to subdue his enemies and to re-establish his kingdom over the earth. This becomes the two-fold theme of the rest of the Bible. God is in the process of subduing his enemies and re-establishing his kingdom over his creation.

House Building after Victory

In the theology of the epics of the ancient Near East, the god who proved himself to be king over all the other gods by winning a signal victory over his foes would celebrate his achievement by building for himself a royal residence. For example, in both the Canaanite epic of Baal and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, there is the theme of cosmic house building by the victorious god after the defeat of draconian chaos.⁴⁹ In the Canaanite creation myth, Baal conquers the dragon of chaos and then has a house built for his enthronement. The climax of the creation story is the celebration of the king's exaltation in his cosmic palace which is the model of the temples where he is worshipped on earth.⁵⁰ In ancient Near Eastern cosmologies the palace/temple would be constructed in preparation for a typically seven day dedication celebration, sometime during which the god would take up his repose in his temple/throne

⁴⁸ We have already noted that Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 34:11 described days of the Lord which picture a reversal of the days of creation where chaos emerges from order. See page ____.

⁴⁹ Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 79; John H. Walton, "Creation," *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 164-65.

⁵⁰ Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park: Two Age Press, 2000), 27.

room.⁵¹ These universal creation conflict myths are echoes of a reality which were distorted through generations of retelling.⁵² When Moses and the other inspired writers of Scripture use the language of contemporary epics, they are correcting them with the truth of revelation.⁵³

We have earlier concluded that prior to the creation of Genesis 1, God in the initial day of the Lord was victorious over the Satan, the great dragon with seven heads.⁵⁴ We should not then be surprised that he immediately builds a royal house for himself. The divine palace/temple is the universe itself.⁵⁵ The building of it is likened to the construction of a gigantic building and God is pictured as architect, surveyor, engineer and artisan. To give Job a sense of what was involved in creation, God asked him a series of questions:

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell *Me*, if you have understanding,
Who set its measurements? Since you know,
Or who stretched the line on it?" (Job 38:4-6)⁵⁶

Heaven and earth comprise the palace of the Great King. "Thus says the LORD, 'Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool'" (Isa 66:1; cf. Matt 5:34-35). It is he "who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in" (Isa 40:22). "The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven" (Ps 11:4).⁵⁷ In Psalm 104:1-4 as the psalmist worships, he indicates how elements of the universe function in God's cosmic house:

O LORD my God, You are very great;
You are clothed with splendor and majesty,
Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak,
Stretching out heaven like a *tent* curtain.
He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters;
He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind;
He makes the winds His messengers,
Flaming fire His ministers.⁵⁸

After his six days of creating his palace, God rested in it on the seventh day (Gen 2:1-3).⁵⁹ Psalm 132:13-14 tells us that God's "habitation" is his "resting place." Since his house is a

⁵¹ Walton, "Creation," 165. In the thinking of the ancient Near East the ideas of creation, temple and rest were tightly linked (Walton, *Genesis*, 147).

⁵² Boyd, *God*, 327.

⁵³ Kline, "*Genesis*," 80.

⁵⁴ Cf., Revelation 12:3-4.

⁵⁵ Kline, *Kingdom*, 27.

⁵⁶ John Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel* (Old Testament Theology 1; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 87.

⁵⁷ Kline, *Kingdom*, 27. His palace even has a penthouse (Amos 9:6; cf., Jer 22:14). Goldingay, *Gospel*, 84.

⁵⁸ For a further discussion of heaven and earth as a cosmic temple see Walton, *Genesis*, 147-52.

⁵⁹ Walton, "Creation," 165.

royal house, his rest was a royal resting and was his first entrance into his newly completed heavenly palace. Thus the dawning of that first Sabbath witnessed an enthronement of the Lord God in his royal house.⁶⁰

Genesis 1:2 as the Key to the Structure of Genesis 1

Genesis 1:2, as the first verse after the introductory summary statement of 1:1, is the key for understanding not only the initial setting of the creation story, but also the structure of the chapter as a whole. This is diagrammed in Chart 19. Many scholars, going back to Augustine,⁶¹ have noted that the creations of the first three days are parallel to those of days four through six.⁶² The opening words of Genesis 1:2 state that “the earth was formless and void.” The creations of days one through three then show how God gave form to the formless earth, and days four through six demonstrate how he filled its emptiness.⁶³ God formed day and night on the first day, divided the heavens from the waters on the second day and created the dry land on the third day to give form to the formless earth of 1:2. Then on the fourth day God filled “the expanse of the heavens” with sun, moon and stars (Gen 1:14-17), on the fifth day he created the birds and fish to fill the heavens and the waters (Gen 1:20, 22) and on the sixth day he created

⁶⁰ Isaiah 66:1-2 is especially significant for understanding the Sabbath of Genesis 2:1-3 as a divine enthronement. Here not only does the Lord proclaim, “Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool” (Isa 66:1a), but he also links this with his rest (Isa 66:1b) and creation (Isa 66:2) (Kline, *Kingdom*, 34-35). For a discussion of Sabbath rest and enthronement which does not understand it to be following a victory over Leviathan, see Kline, *Kingdom*, 34-40.

⁶¹ *City of God* 11:6, cited in Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (New International Commentary on the Old Testament; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 55.

⁶² E.g., Arnold, *Genesis*, 24; Albert H. Baylis, *From Creation to the Cross: Understanding the First Half of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 29; Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, 46; Paul Borgman, *Genesis: The Story We Haven't Heard* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 24; D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Genesis, Volume 1: Genesis 1:1-25:18* (Webster: Evangelical Press, 2003), 35; Hamilton, *Genesis*, 55, 125; R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton: Crossway, 2004), 25; Kline, *Kingdom*, 38-39; Longman, *Genesis*, 105; James Plastaras, *Creation and Covenant* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1968), 24; Ross, *Genesis*, 104; Sarna, *Genesis*, 4; L. A. Turner, “Genesis, Book of,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, 357; Mark A. Throntveit, “Are the Events in the Genesis Creation Account Set Forth in Chronological Order? No,” in *The Genesis Debate: Persistent Questions about Creation and the Flood* (ed. Ronald F. Youngblood; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, 48; Walton, *Genesis*, 113; Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 7; Ronald F. Youngblood, *The Book of Genesis: An Introductory Commentary* (2nd ed.: Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 25.

⁶³ Arnold, *Genesis*, 24; Hughes, *Genesis*, 25; Kidner, *Genesis*, 46; Longman, *Genesis*, 105; Ross, *Genesis*, 104; Youngblood, *Genesis*, 48.

animals and man to fill the earth (Gen 1:28).⁶⁴ In response to the formlessness and emptiness of Genesis 1:2, the earth was formed and filled.⁶⁵

Not only were the creations of days four through six to fill the creations of days one through three, but they were also to rule over the realms created on these days.⁶⁶ Regarding the sun and the moon, God declares that their purpose is “to govern the day and the night” (Gen 1:18).⁶⁷ In fact the functions of the sun and moon in verses 14-17 form a chiasm as illustrated in Chart 20 with the middle function, and therefore the most important, being that of governing.⁶⁸

Chart 20	
The Chiasm of Genesis 1:14-17	
A	"to separate the day from the night" (vs 14a)
B	to "be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years" (vs 14b)
C	"to give light on the earth" (vs 15)
D	"to govern the day" (vs 16a)
D'	"to govern the night" (vs 16b)
C'	"to give light on the earth" (vs 17)
B'	to govern the day and the night" (vs 18a)
A'	"to separate the light from the darkness" (vs 18b)

By analogy the birds and the fish created on the fifth day are to rule the heavens and the seas created on the second day. Likewise, the animals created on the sixth day are to rule the dry land created on day three, as shown in Chart 19. This divine mandate for birds and animals manifests itself in their instinct of territoriality.

The culminating event of the sixth day was the creation of man and woman (Gen 1:27). God indicates that their responsibility is specifically to “rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Gen 1:28). According to Genesis 1:26, this was God’s very purpose in creating man. There God had said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." Man is thus to rule

⁶⁴ Godfrey, *Creation*, 38, 50.

⁶⁵ Godfrey, *Creation*, 37.

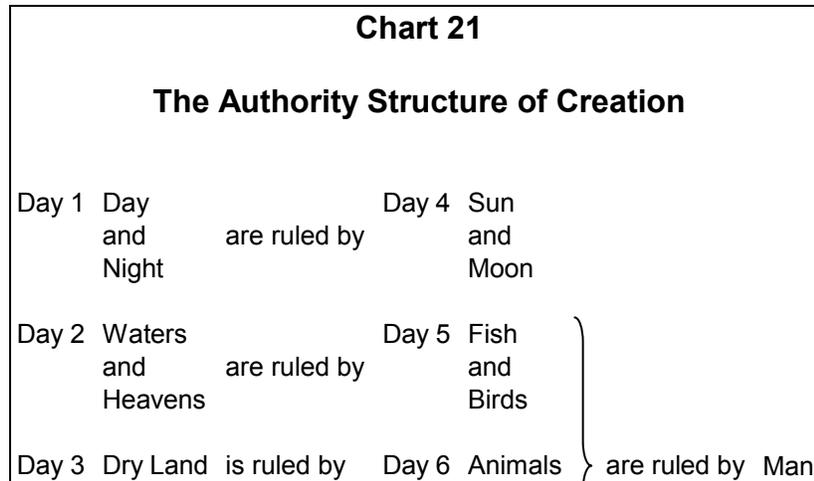
⁶⁶ Kline, *Kingdom*, 38-39.

⁶⁷ Godfrey, *Creation*, 38-39.

⁶⁸ Godfrey, *Creation*, 39.

over the creations of days five and six (Gen 1:20-31) which, in turn, rule over the realms of days two and three (Gen 1:6-13). It is interesting to note that man is not given the responsibility to rule the sun and the moon, the creations of day four. If man chooses to go up and walk around on the moon, God does not mind, but the ruling of the sun and moon is not man's responsibility. The responsibility of the creations of days four through six thus are both to fill and rule the creations of days one through three.

Genesis 1 thus explains the authority structure of God's creation as shown in Chart 21.



God has delegated the rule of the earth to Adam and Eve as his vassal king and queen.

The opening phrase of Genesis 1:2, "The earth was formless and void," thus gives structure to days 1-3 and 4-6, but, in addition, as shown in Chart 19, the final three phrases (1) "and darkness," (2) "was over the surface of the deep," (3) "and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" relate respectively to (1) days 1 and 4, (2) days 2 and 5, and (3) days 3 and 6, the parallel days of the two triads.

The creations of the first⁶⁹ and fourth days address the problem of darkness. On day one, light was created and separated from the darkness, resulting in the realms of day and night (Gen 1:3-5). Then on day four, the sun, moon and stars were created to fill the expanse of the heavens, with the sun and moon governing the day and night respectively (Gen 1:14-18).

On day two, God began to address the problem of the waters covering the earth by creating the expanse of the heavens, thereby separating the waters below the expanse from the waters above the expanse (Gen 1:6-8).⁷⁰ The second day is the only time in the six days of

⁶⁹ Godfrey, *Creation*, 26, 38.

⁷⁰ Godfrey, *Creation*, 31, 38.

creation God does not pronounce the creation of a day as good. The reason for this is that he is not through dealing with the problem of the waters.⁷¹ Then on day five, God created the fish (and even sea monsters) to fill and rule the seas (Gen 1:20-22).

On the third day, God continues to deal with the problem of the waters from Genesis 1:2 by gathering them in one place to allow the dry land to appear.⁷² Then on day six, God creates man who is to “rule over the fish of the sea” (Gen 1:26, 28). With this, all the problems of Genesis 1:2 have been solved by the creations of days one through six.

The Cultural Promise

The single most important verse in the Bible for understanding its plot is Genesis 1:28: “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

The verse sounds like a command. In fact it is often called the Cultural Mandate or the Dominion Mandate. But in reality it is a blessing. Genesis 1:28 begins, "God blessed them; and God said to them" A parallel passage makes this clear. Genesis 24:60 records Rebekah's family's farewell to her as she leaves to marry Isaac, “And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, ‘May you our sister become thousand of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.’” The grammar of Genesis 24:60 is identical to that of Genesis 1:28. This is the Hebrew grammar of blessing.⁷³ In Gen. 1:28 since it is God who declares and himself guarantees the blessing, it would be inappropriate for the English translation to read, "**may you** be fruitful and multiply. . . ." When God guarantees a blessing, it is a promise. Here God promises that he will bless his creatures and see to it that they will fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion.⁷⁴ The verse could therefore better be called the Cultural Promise.

This is a promise which God will fulfill for his people in spite of Adam's later disobedience.⁷⁵ Since the Lord of Adam is the God of sovereign grace and election, he is able to

⁷¹ In Genesis 1:1-2:3 we are told seven times that what God saw was (very) good. However, each day does not include a goodness statement. This declaration is omitted in days two and seven. Yet two such statements are made on both days three and six so that the total number is seven (Godfrey, *Creation*, 32-33).

⁷² Godfrey, *Creation*, 34.

⁷³ The imperatives “be fruitful,” “increase,” and “fill” are not to be understood as commands (in Genesis 1:28) since the introductory statement identifies them as a “blessing.... The imperative, along with the jussive, is the common mood of the blessing ...” Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 2:38. Thus in Genesis 1:28, all the verbs of the blessing are imperatives, whereas in the blessing of Genesis 24:60, “May you become ...” is an imperative and “possess” is a jussive.

⁷⁴ R.C. Leeuwen, "Breeding Stock vs. Lords of Creation," *Christianity Today*, 35 (Nov. 11, 1991) 36-37; Sailhammer, “Genesis,” II:38.

⁷⁵ Leeuwen, "Breeding," 36-37; Sailhammer, “Genesis,” II:38.

guarantee the realization of his covenant blessings even to those who break his covenant. He is able to do this because the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, would one day obediently fulfill every demand of God's law requisite to blessing. And his obedience is reckoned to the believer's account (Rom. 5:13, 19).⁷⁶

The cultural promise reveals God's purposes. The Hebrew word *kabash* translated "subdue" in Genesis 1:28 assumes that the party being subdued is hostile to the subduer.⁷⁷ Who was hostile to Adam and Eve in the "very good" creation God made (cf. Gen. 1:31)? It is the third of the angels who had revolted against God and invaded the earth. God promises that one day every demon along with their prince will be subdued. Their threat is vividly pictured in Genesis 3 as Satan, having indwelt a serpent, invades the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1a) and, as will be discussed later, successfully gains control of the kingdom of the world (Gen. 3:1b-6). God's first main purpose revealed in this promise is to subdue his enemies.

The second theme of Genesis 1:28 is the promise that man will one day rule both the earth (Gen 1:26) and its creatures (Gen 1:26, 28) for God, thereby re-establishing God's kingdom throughout the earth. Thus God's second purpose is to establish his kingdom "over all the earth" (Gen. 1:26) and to use man to accomplish this task (Gen. 1:26, 28).

God's statement "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28a) has the same function as the "go" of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). God's purpose and promise is that His people will fill the earth, everywhere subduing it and ruling it for God.

God promised that one day his people would fill the earth, subdue it and have dominion over it and its creatures, but for Adam personally the realization of the promise was dependent upon his obedience. The mission of Adam was to fill the earth with children of God who would accomplish God's two purposes of subduing His enemies and of establishing His kingdom everywhere, but would he be faithful?

The rest of the Bible is the story of how God subdues his enemies and re-establishes his kingdom over the earth. Every verse of Scripture can be related to one or both of these themes. It is significant that Psalm 110:1-2, the Old Testament passage quoted most frequently in the New Testament, deals with both these themes:

The LORD says to my Lord:
"Sit at My right hand
Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.
The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, *saying*,

⁷⁶Meredith G. Kline, *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 31.

⁷⁷ John N. Oswalt, "kabash," in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, (eds. R. Laird Harris et al.; Chicago: Moody, 1980), 1:430.

"Rule in the midst of Your enemies" (Ps 110:1-2).

When we come to Revelation, the last book of the Bible, the first half of the prophetic section (Rev 4-11) shows how God will finally re-establish his kingdom and the second half (Rev 12-22) indicates how he will ultimately defeat each of his enemies. The issues raised in the first book of the Bible are resolved in the last book.

Conclusion

The Bible's first chapter introduces us to the plot of the Bible. We learn that Satan fell prior to the creation of Genesis 1 and that God's response to Satan's invasion of planet earth was the first day of the Lord, the results of which are described in Genesis 1:2. God's reaction to a demon-infested earth demonstrates what will be his two primary objectives throughout the rest of the Bible and human history: to subdue his enemies and to re-establish his kingdom over the earth.

Having won his initial victory over Satan and his hosts, God in the six days of creation resolves each problem described in Genesis 1:2. He first forms the earth and then fills it, while simultaneously controlling the darkness and the waters. Not only does he create the first man and woman, but he promises them that one day he will fill the earth with children of God through whom he will successfully fulfill his two-fold purpose of subduing his enemies and re-establishing his kingdom. The rest of the Bible is the story of how God fulfills these two purposes.